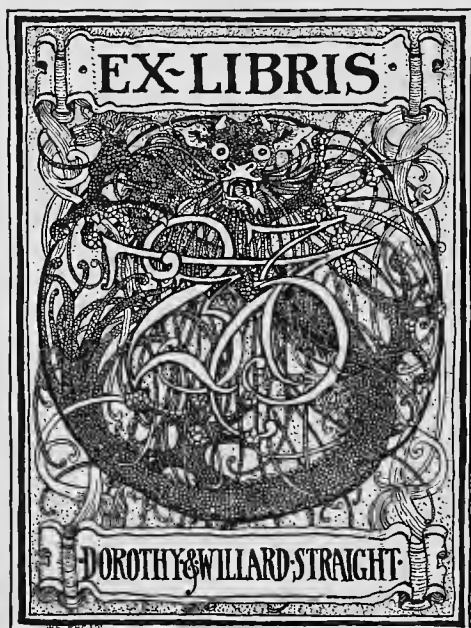




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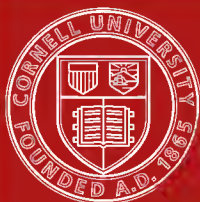
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## ABBAS II



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TORONTO

# ABBAS II

BY

THE EARL OF CROMER

CROMER, EVELYN BARING, 1<sup>st</sup> EARL

*Ζεῦ πάτερ, ἥ ῥά τιν' ἤδη ὑπερμενέων βασιλῆων  
τῇδ' ἄτη δασας καὶ μιν μέγα κῦδος ἀπηύρας;*

*Il. viii. 236-7.*

(O Father Zeus, hast thou indeed ever yet afflicted with such infatuation any one of the mighty Kings, and so deprived him of high renown?)

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## PREFACE

IN my work entitled *Modern Egypt*, which was published in the spring of 1908, I brought the history of Egyptian reforms down to May 1907, at which date I left the country, but the account of the principal political events connected with purely Egyptian, as distinguished from Soudanese, affairs stopped at the date of Tewfik Pasha's death, which occurred on January 7, 1892. I had, at the time of publication, written an account of the events which took place shortly after the accession of Abbas II. to the Khedivate. For reasons which must be obvious to all who are possessed of even a cursory acquaintance with Egyptian affairs, I did not at the time consider it desirable to deal publicly with this period of Egyptian history. The circumstances which militated against publication have now passed away. Owing to the peculiar conditions under which Egypt has been governed since 1882, it was inevitable that the personal character of its ruler should exercise, if not a decisive, at least a

very important influence, both on the conduct of the administration and on the general policy pursued by the British Government and its responsible agents. Most of the accounts which have up to the present time reached the public, whether of the actions or the character of Abbas II., have been incomplete or distorted, sometimes by reason of political partisanship, which when due to a genuine albeit often erroneous view of what constitutes the real interests of the Egyptian people is, to say the least, comprehensible ; sometimes from sheer venality, which is far less excusable ; but more often owing to the fact that no really trustworthy information, on which to form an independent opinion, has been forthcoming. Generally speaking, however, it may be said that my countrymen, who in the aggregate are always good-natured and at times perhaps somewhat unduly credulous,<sup>1</sup> have until

<sup>1</sup> The following remarks made by Sir Edwin Pears (*Turkey and its People*, p. 89), whose long residence at Constantinople enables him to speak with authority on the politics of the Near East, are topical: " In the worst periods of Abdul Hamid's reign, many English and other European statesmen who visited Yildiz came away with the conviction that the Sultan was possessed of a remarkable zeal for reform and for far-reaching projects for the welfare of all his subjects, as to whom, whether Christians or Moslems, he would never make any distinction, ' for he loved them all equally.' "

Amongst the many distinguished individuals who visited Cairo during my tenure of office, Lord Rosebery appeared to me to be easily first in his power of rapidly gauging the real characters of the leading personalities with whom he was brought in contact.

quite recently been inclined to take at their face value the plausible apologies for Abbas II.'s proceedings which have from time to time been presented to them by interested, half-informed, or deluded political observers. The reasons for reticence on this subject, which obtained seven years ago, no longer exist. It is probable, though by no means certain, that if Abbas II. had continued to intrigue in the dark and to cast a prudent veil over his extreme Anglophobia, he would have remained Khedive of Egypt till the day of his death. He has, however, preferred to throw in his lot with the enemies of Great Britain, being probably under the impression that he was joining the side which would be ultimately victorious in the war now being waged. In adopting this course, he committed political suicide. There can, therefore, now be no reason why the story of the events which immediately followed his accession should not be told. That story will, I hope and believe, serve to confirm the British public in the belief that in deposing the late ruler of Egypt His Majesty's Government has not only committed an act of political justice, but that it has also acted in the best interests of the Egyptian people.

This small volume, therefore, merely deals with one chapter of contemporaneous Egyptian history. No attempt has been made to write a

complete account of the events which have occurred in Egypt since 1907. I trust that the history of those events will in due course be written by some qualified person. I am not in possession of the material which would enable me to write it either with satisfaction to myself or with any real advantage to my readers. I may, however, state very briefly my personal opinion as regards the larger aspects of the various phases through which Egypt has passed during the last eight years.

My good friend, Sir Eldon Gorst, for whom I entertained the highest regard and esteem based on a long and close intimacy, succeeded at a time of very exceptional difficulty to the post which I had held for twenty-four years. The Nationalist party in Egypt, although, as I had been always well aware and as subsequent events proved to be the case, they were no faithful representatives of the opinions and true interests of their fellow-countrymen, made a considerable figure on the political stage, and to the casual observer were naturally invested with an influence and importance which they were far from possessing in reality. A Radical Government, backed by a strong Parliamentary majority, had just succeeded to power in England. The British political atmosphere was heavily charged with democratic ideals. Of these, some, such as

the Old Age Pension scheme, which sought to obtain a very worthy object however faulty may have been the execution of the plan actually adopted, were well deserving of sympathy. Others, for various reasons, fell outside the range of practical politics, whilst a few, such as the idea that democratic pressure would compel continental Governments to effect vast reductions in their armaments and thus inaugurate an era of universal peace, were wholly illusory and could only have germinated in the brains of those who dwell in a political Cloud Cuckooland. Amongst these *idola fori*, as Bacon would have called them, the necessity for a rapid development of Western institutions in Eastern countries occupied a prominent place. Many circumstances contributed to render an experiment in this direction inevitable in Egypt. The idea that Egyptian institutions required remodelling in a Liberal sense, that insufficient attention had been paid to Egyptian education, and that the Egyptians should be allowed a greater and more effective share in the government of their own country, had been sedulously fostered both by influential politicians, who had derived their knowledge of the state of affairs from a rapid visit to Egypt, and by a section of the British press. Moreover, the unfortunate Denshawai incident, which resulted in a number of accused persons being

condemned to sentences which, though not unjust, were, I may now readily admit, unduly severe, was vigorously exploited by the opponents of the existing regime, and gave a wholly false impression of the general spirit in which the administration of Egypt was being conducted. Further, the hopes and enthusiasm of British Liberals had been evoked by recent events in Turkey and Persia. During a very fleeting moment it appeared that the East had really awoken from its slumbers, that Eastern habits of thought had undergone a radical change, and that both of these countries had entered the path which led to genuine constitutional government. Was Liberal England, it was not unnaturally asked, to lag behind and to refuse to the Egyptians those privileges which the populations of other Moslem countries had secured on their own initiative ?

I realised that, with the solution of the financial difficulties which had weighed so heavily on the early years of the Occupation, and the removal of serious international friction subsequent to the conclusion of the Anglo-French Agreement of 1904, Egyptian affairs had entered into a new phase. I foresaw that some changes would have to be made after my departure from the country, and it was mainly on this account that, speaking of my English critics in a farewell speech which I

made to a large audience in the Cairo Theatre on May 7, 1907, I said that the difference which divided us was "not so much one of principle as of degree. They wish to gallop. I consider that a steady jog-trot is the pace best suited to advance the interests of this country. It is a pace which has done us good service in the past. I say it should be continued, never relaxing into a walk or breaking into a gallop; and my strong conviction is that if the pace be greatly mended, a serious risk will be incurred that the horse will come down and break his knees."

Sir Eldon Gorst made a thoroughly honest and very courageous attempt to carry out the programme which, if it had not been dictated to him from the Foreign Office—a point as to which I am not in possession of sufficient information to justify any expression of opinion—was certainly prescribed for him by the circumstances with which he had to deal. No drastic change was made in Egyptian institutions, but it is easy to overrate the importance of any conceivable changes of this nature. In countries such as Egypt the manner in which the machinery of the Government is worked is of greater importance than the institutions themselves. On the other hand, a wholly new spirit was breathed into the administration. The cordial co-operation of

the Khedive was invited, and in order to ensure that co-operation His Highness was allowed a far freer hand in dealing with matters, chiefly of a personal character, which specially interested him, than he had previously enjoyed. British guidance was reduced to a minimum, and the Egyptian Ministers, as also their principal subordinates, were made to feel that they must act on their own responsibility and to the best of their own judgment.

I have said that an experiment of this nature was inevitable. I may now add that it was as well that it should have been tried. Nothing short of an actual experiment would have convinced the Egyptian public and the extreme English sympathisers with Egyptian aspirations that, given the existing facts and the material available, a sudden change from tutelage to almost complete independence could not be effected without a serious dislocation of the whole political and administrative machinery of the country. The attempt to ensure the cordial co-operation of the Khedive was sound enough in principle, but the price which had to be paid in order to ensure that co-operation was excessive. It involved the revival of some serious abuses which had been suppressed, such as the shameless traffic in grades and decorations, and it entailed much injustice and even oppression to



individuals. Moreover, the plan was almost certain to split on the rock of the Khedive's personal character. Like Virgil's Drances, he was "seditione potens." He was a master of petty intrigue and was so wedded to tortuous courses that he was incapable of steadfastly pursuing for long any really loyal and straightforward course of action. I have a strong conviction, based on conversations which I held with Sir Eldon Gorst shortly before his tragically premature death, that his honeymoon with the Khedive, which is a very common episode when Englishmen are first brought into close contact with Orientals of the type of Abbas II., was approaching its close. I should add in justice to the Khedive that he showed some degree of genuine gratitude for the consideration with which Sir Eldon Gorst had treated him. When he learnt that Sir Eldon was stricken with an incurable disease, he hastened *incognito* to England in order to visit him and express his sympathy. It is the best act I have ever heard of his performing. Much may be forgiven him for the real feeling which he displayed on this occasion.

As to the governing capacity of the Egyptian Ministers and their subordinates, a steady improvement had been going on for a quarter of a century. A very fair standard of honesty and

capacity prevailed. The future was bright with the hope of further progress in this direction. But it was too much to expect, when scarcely a generation had elapsed since the close of the orgy of corrupt and despotic misrule in which Ismail Pasha and his predecessors had indulged, that a whole staff should have been created capable of piloting unaided the very complicated machinery necessary for the government of cosmopolitan Egypt. It may indeed be confidently asserted, looking to Sir Eldon Gorst's ability, his great moral courage, and his intimate acquaintance with Egyptian affairs, that the task which he was set to accomplish was impossible of achievement, and that in less skilful hands than his the failure would have been even more marked than was actually the case. My belief is that had he lived he would himself have initiated considerable changes in the policy with which his name is associated, and I do not doubt that he had the capacity to deal successfully with the altered conditions which would necessarily have supervened.

As events turned out, the general result of the experiment was to put back the hands of the political clock. Egyptian autonomy, far from gaining, rather lost ground. The reaction, which was anticipated by all who were really acquainted with the condition of the country, ensued. It

soon became apparent that it would be necessary to revert to the system of vigilant and active British supervision, and more direct interference on the part of the representative of the British Government. Moreover, indications were not wanting that a return to this system, far from being resented, would be welcomed by at least a very considerable portion—probably by a large majority—of the population of Egypt, whether foreign or indigenous. The best features of genuine but heretofore relatively voiceless Egyptian Nationalism survived and I do not doubt still survive. But the occupation of the blatant and very incapable Nationalist demagogue, whose patriotism was shown by reckless vituperation poured on the benefactors of his own country and by that alone, was gone. Lord Kitchener was sent to Cairo to assume the office rendered vacant by the death of Sir Eldon Gorst. The result has fully justified the wisdom of the choice. Lord Kitchener speedily gained the confidence of all sections of the Egyptian public, but it is especially worthy of note that he did so, not by allowing the Egyptians to govern themselves, but by exercising a stringent control over the proceedings of the Khedive, and by himself governing the Egyptians. It is more than doubtful whether the policy which he adopted would have been practicable had he assumed office three

years earlier, when English belief in the growth of Oriental Constitutionalism was as yet unshaken. Certain changes have been made in Egyptian institutions. The General Assembly, which was a useless and cumbersome body, has been abolished. The powers of the Legislative Council have been somewhat increased. Both reforms were fully justified, but neither is of any very great political significance. The main change which was effected was that the government became of an even more pronounced personal character than at any previous period since the British occupation took place. That this form of government is open to some objections is sufficiently obvious, but it is suited to the actual conditions of the country, and so long as the personal power is exercised in the true interests of the Egyptian population, no very pressing need for drastic change will or need arise. It is, however, not only conceivable, but highly probable, that in the future Egyptian institutions, more especially if the Capitulations are abolished, will undergo some further transformations. Neither need any such transformations be regretted if they are gradual, and if they are carefully elaborated by those who are well acquainted with the condition and actual requirements of the country. Any sudden and complete changes will, in the future as in the past, be disappointing

to their authors, as the country will be unable to assimilate them, and a reaction, such as that which has recently occurred, will almost infallibly ensue.

I now turn to the present and the immediate future. After hanging in the balance for a period of thirty-three years, the political destiny of Egypt has at last been definitely settled. The country has been incorporated into the British Empire. No other solution was possible. Provided that the statesmanship be skilful and that there is no undue haste, the adoption of this measure, far from hindering, will tend to facilitate the execution of that rationally Liberal policy to which Great Britain is wedded in dealing with its outlying dependencies. The tie with Turkey, which has never been of the smallest benefit to Egypt or to the Egyptians, has been definitely severed. A distinguished member of the family of Mehemet Ali, who has for long honoured me with his personal friendship, and whom I believe to possess all the qualifications necessary to fill the high office to which he has been called with advantage to the people over whom he will rule, has been named Sultan of Egypt. If I understand rightly, the hands of the British Government are free if at any future time it should be found necessary to revise this arrangement. Notably,

and the point is one which may some day become of importance, nothing definite has been laid down as to the order of succession in the event of the Sultanate becoming vacant. It cannot be denied that there are some disadvantages in a Protectorate by comparison with annexation, pure and simple. The ex-territorial rights of foreigners, which since 1882 have been a thorn in the side of the British Government, do not, *ipso facto*, disappear. Moreover, although for the present I am convinced that there need not be the least apprehension on this score, there may in the future be some risk that, as in other Oriental countries, the Court may become a centre of baneful and embarrassing intrigue. Nevertheless, there can, in my opinion, be no doubt that His Majesty's Government exercised a very wise discretion in deferring to local opinion, and in showing a preference for a Protectorate as opposed to the assumption of complete sovereignty. The family of Mehemet Ali is not indeed Egyptian, but in course of time a certain amount of genuine national feeling, which has a very fair claim to be treated with respect and consideration, has clustered round the dynasty. Moreover, apart from Nationalism, legitimate Moslem sentiment will be conciliated by the fact that a Moslem will occupy the highest position in the State.

Any full discussion of what further steps may become necessary as a consequence of the political change which has now been made must obviously stand over until after the close of the present war. I confine my remarks, therefore, to two points of special importance.

The Capitulations must, of course, be abolished. Their disappearance is clearly foreshadowed in the despatch, dated December 19, 1914, addressed, under instructions from the Foreign Office, by the Acting High Commissioner to the newly-appointed Sultan. It would be premature to dwell on the precise method which will have to be adopted in order to ensure the attainment of this object. I wish, however, to insist on one point, to which I have on several previous occasions drawn attention. The foreign residents in Egypt cannot reasonably or rightly be considered as aliens in the sense in which that term is applied to a Frenchman resident in England or an Englishman resident in France. Both sound policy and justice point to the conclusion that, for the purposes of the present argument, they should be considered as Egyptians. I am therefore clearly of opinion that, as a consequence of the abolition of the Capitulations, some practical and unobjectionable means must be found for associating the members of the European communities in Egypt with the Government of the

country to such an extent as will afford reasonable facilities for them to make their voices heard. There are various methods by which this may be done. I will not now attempt to discuss their relative merits or demerits. I content myself with indicating the general principle which, as it appears to me, should be borne in mind.

The second point to which I wish to draw attention is perhaps even of greater importance. Why is it that when the local press was wholly untrammelled, and was using its liberty in such a manner as to afford the strongest arguments for putting it in fetters, when the spurious Nationalist movement of recent times was in full blast, and when the powers of intrigue of the ex-Sultan and the ex-Khedive were producing the maximum effect of which they were capable, there was never any really serious danger that Egyptian affairs would get thoroughly out of hand? Why is it that the appeals to religious zeal and fanaticism made by the Turkish militarists and their German fellow-conspirators have been wholly unproductive of result, and have been answered both in Egypt and in the Soudan by the most remarkable expressions of loyalty and friendship towards the British Government? The presence of British garrisons in Cairo, Alexandria, and Khartoum unquestionably counts for much in explanation of these very singular political



phenomena. Something also may possibly be attributed to the fact that the more educated classes may have recognised that the Turco-Prussian regime, with which they were threatened, would assuredly combine many of the worst features both of Western and of Eastern administration. But amongst contributory causes I have no hesitation in assigning the foremost place to the fact that no general discontent prevailed of which the agitator, the religious fanatic, or the political intriguer could make use as a lever to further his own designs. In spite of the most positive assurances that they were the victims of ruthless tyranny and oppression, the populations both of Egypt and of the Soudan refused to believe that they were misgoverned. And why was it that no general discontent prevailed? Here again I have no hesitation in answering the question, although in doing so I am well aware that I may incur the charge of commending a policy for the initiation and execution of which I am myself mainly responsible. The subject, however, is too important to allow personal considerations of this nature to hinder a free expression of opinion. The true reason why there has been no general discontent in Egypt or the Soudan is, I believe, that State expenditure has been carefully controlled and has been adapted to the financial resources of the two countries

concerned, with the result that taxation has been low. It was futile to expect that the Egyptian fellah or the Soudanese tribesman would believe that he was oppressed and maltreated when the demands of the tax-gatherer not only ceased to be capricious, but were far more moderate than either he or his immediate progenitors had ever dreamed to be possible.

I have on many previous occasions dwelt on this subject, and if I insist on it again it is because of its supreme political importance. The corner-stone of Egyptian and Soudanese policy should be a full recognition of the fact that, in the absence of ties, such as community of race, language, religion and social customs, the only link between the governors and the governed is to be found in material interests, and amongst those interests by far the most important is the imposition of light fiscal burthens. I hold, therefore, that the political conditions with which we have to deal are such that all other considerations must yield to the necessity of keeping taxation low. Those who are really responsible for the administration of Egypt and the Soudan will have to rely almost wholly on themselves in the execution of a policy based on the principle indicated above. They will obtain but little support anywhere, for economy is always unpopular, whilst from many quarters they will of a surety be sharply criticised.

They will not be able to rely to any great extent on the support of public opinion, whether local or British. Englishmen are, generally speaking, very prone to form their opinions on English precedents and English practices. In their own country they have recently experienced an expansion of State expenditure and an increase of public burdens which, but a few years ago, would have been scouted as impossible, with the result that public opinion on the subject of economy has become demoralised, and that the national conscience in dealing with the economical administration of its dependencies has probably become in some degree blunted. Then, again, many leading English politicians and influential newspapers are never tired of insisting on the political desirability of pushing on Egyptian education rapidly as a preliminary measure necessary to the speedy development of local autonomy. Personally, I do not believe that such education as can be imparted in the schools and colleges<sup>1</sup> will ever render the Egyptians capable of complete self-government without some transformation of the national character, which must necessarily be a slow process. But that is not the point on which to insist at present.

<sup>1</sup> The much-vaunted German "Kultur," which, so far as it goes, is certainly of a high order, does not appear to have produced much effect, or at all events much good effect, on the German national character.

I merely wish to dwell on the costliness of education, and to indicate the political unwisdom of adopting an educational policy so advanced as to necessitate the imposition of burdensome taxation. Then, again, attacks are to be apprehended from another and very different quarter. The zealous administrator, conscious of the good he is capable of performing, will clamour for more roads, bridges, hospitals, and all the other paraphernalia of advanced civilisation, and will be apt to ignore the ultimate consequences which must result from any very heavy expenditure to secure these objects rapidly.

Responsible Egyptian and Soudanese statesmen, however much they may sympathise with proposals of this nature considered exclusively on their own merits, will do well to keep alike the political dreamer and the bureaucratic administrator at arm's length. They will act wisely if they hesitate to embark in costly schemes, however tempting, until they feel assured that the resources of the country are adequate to bear the consequent charges without adding unduly to the fiscal burthens of the population. They will encourage the spread of education—especially of technical and female education—the construction of public works and other cognate forms of progress, but only so far as such encouragement can be given without having

recourse to the imposition of fresh and vexatious taxation.

The war now in course of progress must, of necessity, cause considerable embarrassment to the Egyptian Treasury. The execution of works of public utility will, I do not doubt, have in many cases to be postponed, and progress in various directions will have to be arrested. But it is permissible to hope that the embarrassment will only be temporary. In view of the thoroughly sound condition of Egyptian State finance, and of the large reserve which, but a short time ago, was at the disposal of the Government, it ought, with reasonable prudence, to be possible to tide over the present crisis without any permanent resort to increased taxation. I notice, however, with some concern, a report in the local press that the octroi duty is to be re-established at Alexandria. It is a thoroughly bad tax, as it falls on the articles of everyday consumption used by the poorest classes. Moreover, it affords very special facilities for illicit practices on the part of the subordinate agents of the Government. I earnestly trust that octroi duties will not again be incorporated into the permanent fiscal system of the country.

I have only to add that the last chapter of this work is of recent composition. The remaining

chapters were written some years ago when the occurrences which are recounted were fresh in my memory. Some alterations have, however, been made in the original text.

CROMER.

LONDON, *January* 26, 1915.

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## CHAPTER I

### THE ACCESSION OF ABBAS II

JANUARY—JULY 1892

Tewfik Pasha's last illness—Measures adopted after his death—  
Arrival of Abbas II. in Egypt—The Firman incident—  
Moukhtar Pasha's interference—Situation in July 1892.

ON January 7, 1892, I was informed that the Khedive Tewfik, who was residing at Helouan, a few miles south of Cairo, was dangerously ill. I at once went to Helouan and saw the German doctor who was attending His Highness. He informed me that the Khedive could not live for more than a few hours.

Prompt action was necessary. Any hesitation as to the proper course to pursue might have involved serious political consequences. Mustapha Pasha Fehmi, who was Prime Minister, Tigrane Pasha, the Minister for Foreign Affairs, Sir Elwin Palmer and myself conferred together. There could be no doubt that, under the Sultan's Firman of 1873, Prince Abbas, the eldest son of

Tewfik Pasha, was the rightful heir. We all agreed that no time should be lost in proclaiming him immediately after the death of his father. The Firman fixed the age of majority at eighteen. Was Prince Abbas of age? No one knew the precise date of his birth. At last an old Turk, who had been for many years in the service of Tewfik Pasha, was found; from him we elicited the fact that Prince Abbas was born on July 14, 1874. He was thus still a minor. He would only attain his majority on July 14, 1892. The Firman provided that a Council of Regency should be appointed in the event of the Khedive being a minor; but it was desirable to avoid an interregnum, which would probably have given rise to intrigue and to difficulties of various kinds. When, therefore, some one whispered that the age of a Mohammedan Prince should be calculated according to the Mohammedan calendar, in virtue of which the year consists only of 354 days, I jumped at the suggestion. Under this calculation Prince Abbas had attained his majority on December 24, 1891, that is to say, fourteen days before the death of his father.

It was arranged that, immediately after Tewfik Pasha's decease, Prince Abbas, who was at Vienna, should be invited to come to Cairo, that the Sultan should be informed, and that a public

notification should be issued to the effect that the Ministers in office would carry on the administration, *ad interim*, until Prince Abbas arrived to take up the government of the country. The adoption of this procedure rendered Turkish interference, which was to be apprehended and which would certainly have been harmful, difficult, if not impossible.

I then returned to Cairo. About 7 P.M. on the same day Tewfik Pasha died.

The programme arranged at Helouan was faithfully carried into execution. No time was given for intrigue to operate. The Sultan, *more suo*, ratified the accomplished facts. On January 8, the Turkish Ambassador in London informed Lord Salisbury that, in consequence of the death of Tewfik Pasha, it had pleased His Imperial Majesty to nominate Prince Abbas to be Khedive of Egypt, and, further, that the President of the Council of Ministers had been charged with the duty of conducting the administration temporarily until the arrival of the new Khedive.

On the Khedive's arrival in Cairo on January 16, the whole of the garrison, British and Egyptian, was paraded in the square in front of Abdin Palace; the Sultan's telegram was then read aloud, and the troops presented arms, whilst the united military bands played the Turkish National Anthem. The object of this display

was to show publicly the desire of the British Government, whilst supporting the Khedive, to recognise the legitimate rights of the Sultan.

Immediately after his arrival, the Khedive confirmed the Ministers in office. At my first interview with him he impressed me favourably. On February 21, I wrote to Lord Salisbury: "I see that the young Khedive is going to be very *Egyptian*." This gave the keynote of what was to follow.

For the moment the Khedive's vague and undisciplined Egyptian proclivities led him to engage, not in an Anglophobe, but in a Turcophobe campaign. He had started badly with the Sultan. As time went on, the relations between the Suzerain and his vassal became more and more strained. I need not add anything to the brief account which I have already given of what is known as the "Firman Incident."<sup>1</sup> This incident was of some duration. It lasted for three months. It ended in the complete discomfiture of the Sultan.

Another event occurred about this time, which also caused much irritation. M. de Réverseaux, the French Consul-General, had, shortly after the Khedive's accession, hinted to me that it would be desirable to nominate a stronger, by which he really meant a less Anglophile,

<sup>1</sup> *Modern Egypt*, vol. ii. pp. 267-69.

Prime Minister in the place of Mustapha Pasha Fehmi. I naturally deprecated any change.

A little later, Moukhtar Pasha pressed the Khedive to change his Ministers. He advised Mustapha Pasha Fehmi to resign, and he spoke openly of the desirability of his dismissal. Action of this sort on the part of the Turkish Commissioner was contrary to the spirit of the Firmans. I supported the Khedive in his resistance to Turkish encroachments on his prerogatives. The result was that he telegraphed to the Sultan complaining of Moukhtar Pasha's conduct, and that, in the presence both of his Ministers and of Moukhtar Pasha, who were specially summoned for the occasion, he expressed his full confidence in his Ministry. These events caused much annoyance at Constantinople. The Sultan revenged himself on England by conferring some trumpery grades and decorations on a number of Anglophobe newspaper editors and others. In the meanwhile, in so far as the supremacy of British influence was concerned, a good start had been made. The Khedive stood, for the time being, in need of the assistance of England in order to help him to withstand Turkish pressure.

After the ferment created by the Firman incident had subsided, there was a political pause. For a while, no events of any serious

importance occurred. Early in July, I left Egypt for London encouraged by the hope that the change of Khedives would not involve any considerable change in the local situation in Egypt. I was soon to be undeceived.

## CHAPTER II

### THE MUSTAPHA FEHMI CRISIS

JULY 1892—JANUARY 1893

Position of the Khedive—Change of Ministry in England—Effect produced in Egypt—Local situation in November—Illness and dismissal of Mustapha Pasha—Correspondence with Lord Rosebery—Riaz Pasha is appointed Prime Minister.

IN truth, although the appearances of the moment justified me in nurturing hopes of an auspicious future, I could scarcely bring myself to believe that the first impression, which I had derived when I heard that Tewfik Pasha was dying, could turn out to be altogether incorrect. When the German doctor at Helouan told me that a change of Khedives was inevitable, it flashed across my mind at once that the flimsy political edifice known by the name of the Government of Egypt must, of necessity, be rudely shaken. Never, indeed, has Fate more richly deserved the Homeric epithet of destructive, than when, in striking down this man in the prime of life, it went far to shatter a system, the very existence of which seemed to

depend in no small degree on the prolongation of his life.

What, in fact, were the main features of the system under which Egypt had been governed during the decade previous to Tewfik Pasha's death? Its corner-stone was that there should be a fairly good understanding between the Khedive and a few of the highest Egyptian officials on the one hand, and the British Consul-General and a few of the highest British officials on the other hand. For ten years this good understanding existed. Friction occasionally occurred, but it was always possible to smooth matters over and to arrive at some satisfactory compromise of existing difficulties. But this system, although it worked fairly well in practice, was manifestly very artificial. Its power to resist any rude shock was, to say the least, doubtful. Indeed, the only matter for surprise was that it had lasted so long.

Was it conceivable that an inexperienced youth of eighteen, fresh from the scholastically sound but rather narrow training of an Austrian college, would possess the intelligence, patience, judgment, and self-restraint necessary to conform himself to the exigencies of a system of this sort? It was obviously highly improbable that he would be endowed with those qualities in any adequate degree. Moreover, even before the



arrival of Prince Abbas, I was warned by an Austrian friend, who was in a position to know the facts, that the authorities of the Viennese College where he had been educated had not formed a favourable opinion of his character, and that he was likely to cause a good deal of trouble. He was sure to be surrounded by bad advisers. He would belie his oriental origin if he did not, directly or indirectly, encourage sycophancy in those around him. The position of the English in Egypt rendered them peculiarly liable to misrepresentation and attack. The Khedive would of a surety be urged not to humiliate himself by listening to British advice. Let him throw off the onerous yoke of the British, which his father, who was poor in spirit, had borne all too patiently. He need have no fear of the consequences. The Egyptians could certainly govern Egypt without foreign aid. Such, at all events, was the opinion of those hybrid and nondescript Egyptians who had the ear of the Khedive, and who, more than any other class, chafed under British control. Moreover, it was pointed out that France, with Russia in the background, was an enthusiastic advocate of Egyptian autonomy.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> It will, of course, be remembered that these events occurred prior to the conclusion of the Anglo-French Agreement of 1904. This Agreement was the first step towards the establishment of that close friendship which has been fraught with so much benefit to the cause of European civilisation.

Arguments of this sort could not fail to exercise an influence on a self-willed boy of an arbitrary disposition. The fact that he was a boy enhanced the difficulty of dealing with him. "The Khedive," I wrote to Lord Rosebery on November 12, 1892, "has been very foolish about a number of small things, but he is so young and inexperienced that he ought not to be judged harshly." On the other hand, it had to be borne in mind that a mischievous child of ten years old, armed with some straw and a box of matches, can cause a conflagration as well as a man of forty who is bent on committing arson. It was not easy to draw the line between the indulgence due to youth, and the severity necessary to prevent youthfulness from incurring the consequences of its own unreflecting and headstrong folly. More than this. Was it certain that the Khedive was in reality so Egyptian as at first sight appeared? His obvious intention was to pose as an Egyptian patriot. In October 1892, whilst I was absent from Egypt and Mr. (afterwards Sir) Arthur Hardinge was acting as my *locum tenens*, the Khedive complained to him that Mustapha Pasha Fehmi "was regarded by the Egyptians as too English, and not sufficiently Egyptian." On the other hand, Rouiller Bey, an Anglophobe Swiss whom the Khedive had appointed to be his private secretary, was, he thought, "a most

excellent Egyptian.” As to Tigrane Pasha, whose plausible and fallacious reasoning appealed forcibly to the untutored mind of his youthful master, the Khedive said : “ Before I became Khedive I only knew him as an Armenian, and it has been somewhat of a surprise to me to find that an Armenian could be so good an Egyptian.”

The Khedive’s patriotism, if genuine and directed in a healthy channel, deserved sympathy and respect. But was it genuine ? Was it directed in a right channel ? Did not the Khedive, and those who surrounded him, rather confound the terms Khedivial and Egyptian, which, in fact, were far from being synonymous ?

These were important questions, which needed careful consideration. They acquired all the greater importance when it became apparent that the Khedive took little real interest in any matters which affected the welfare of the Egyptian population, that his ebullitions of patriotism were generally reserved for occasions when some imaginary slight had been inflicted on himself, that his character was overbearing and arbitrary, that he was unjust in the exercise of such authority as he possessed, and, generally, that he was more mindful of his personal dignity and position, as to which he was very sensitive, than he was of the true interests of his subjects. Care,

therefore, had to be taken lest under the attractive name of patriotism, which ere now has been made to cover many foolish acts and unworthy ends, a system of personal government should be introduced similar in principle to that which had with so much labour been eradicated. The admiration which the young Khedive expressed for his despotic grandfather, coupled with the rather unseemly contempt which he displayed for the memory of his law-abiding father, also served the purpose of danger-signals, and tended to induce a belief that the patriotism, which was so freely displayed before the world, might be a somewhat spurious article.

During my absence from Egypt, a General Election took place in England. The result was that Lord Salisbury vacated office, and that Mr. Gladstone came into power. On August 18, Lord Rosebery assumed charge of the Foreign Office. The change came at a rather unfortunate moment in so far as Egyptian affairs were concerned.

It is dangerous for an oriental to base any political calculations on his own estimate of the state of party politics in England. The local politicians of Cairo were, however, unaware of the danger. They did not seek to shun it. Tigrane Pasha, more especially, was a careful student of the English newspapers. He some-

what prided himself on the accuracy with which he could gauge British public opinion. He knew that a section of the Liberal party, which had just come into power, was in favour of the speedy evacuation of Egypt. Tigrane Pasha and his friends, therefore, urged that the moment was singularly favourable for venturing a supreme effort to throw off the British yoke. Mr. Gladstone's sentiments were well known. He would surely abide by them. In the days of Lord Salisbury an iron-fisted Consul-General could count on support, whatever he might do. But those days were happily over. The Khedive might feel assured that the British Government, led by a statesman of cosmopolitan sympathies, would side with him and not with the Consul-General.

Tigrane Pasha's inferences were erroneous, but from the facts before him they were neither incomprehensible nor devoid of some justification. It was, indeed, very unfortunate that at a time when the young Khedive's mind was in a state of flux, and when he was manifestly tending towards Anglophobia, the adventitious circumstance of a change of Government in England enabled the half-informed Cairene politicians to adduce some specious arguments, which seemed to show that the adoption of an Anglophobe policy might be crowned with success.

The letters and despatches which Sir Arthur Hardinge wrote during my absence prepared me for a change. "The Palace tone," he wrote on October 13, "is what the Khedive calls 'Egyptian.' Though the sympathies of most of the Beys and Pashas of the household are, from tastes and education, rather French than English, they are not in favour of French political aspirations in Egypt. Like Tigrane Pasha they fancy that they are able to rule without foreign assistance of any kind, and they are ambitious of place and power for themselves and their protégés and dependants. Of the feelings of the great body of the Egyptian people, or of any class of it outside the official, I suspect they know and care very little. They are mostly lax Mohammedans, with very free-thinking notions about religion."

The Prime Minister, Mustapha Pasha Fehmi, was evidently marked out as an object of attack. He had been in Europe during the summer. Immediately after his return to Egypt, early in October, rumours were circulated to the effect that a change of Ministers was imminent.

I found on my arrival at Cairo that Sir Arthur Hardinge's account of the local situation was correct. The Khedive, who appeared friendly in July, had become hostile in November. It

was not possible to assign any one special reason for the change which had taken place in his disposition. It was true that he had first heard through the newspapers of the appointment of Sir Colin Moncrieff to a post in London, whereas he ought to have been informed at an earlier date ; that an English officer, who had his back turned and did not know that he was in the presence of the Khedive, had failed to salute him ; that another English officer in the Egyptian service had come to his reception in long boots, whereas he ought to have come in trousers ; that an English dragoon, who but a few months previously had been hoeing potatoes in Somersetshire and who had possibly never heard that such a person as the Khedive existed, had not risen from his seat on the platform of a railway station as a train bearing the Khedive swept by ; that the Sirdar would not summarily dismiss certain native officers who had committed no offence, but whom the Khedive wished to cashier without any form of trial whatsoever ; that the English head of the police was equally recalcitrant, and defended the cause of a native officer who had been unfortunate enough to incur the Khedive's wrath for some trivial offence ; and that these, and a host of other similar incidents, clearly showed in the eyes of a petulant boy and his sycophants the existence of a deliberate plan to

humiliate and degrade the rightful ruler of the country.<sup>1</sup>

Petty complaints of this sort were but the outward and visible signs of general discontent, which had its origin in the fact that British troops were in occupation of the country, and that British civil and military administrators prevented the Khedive from doing what he liked, whereas he thought his will, however whimsical and capricious, should invariably be law. Those around him confirmed this view by constantly singing the refrain which Voltaire puts into the mouths of certain imaginary courtiers :

Que de grâce ! Que de grandeur !  
Ah ! Combien Monseigneur  
Doit être content de Lui-même !

As a natural result of this frame of mind the Khedive regarded every British official in the Egyptian service in the same light as Martial regarded Sabidius, and as the English translator of the well-known epigram regarded Dr. Fell. As I was the representative of England, I naturally found myself exalted to the chief position amongst many Sabidii. The Khedive could not say exactly why he disliked myself and other English-

<sup>1</sup> Some of the incidents to which I have here alluded happened rather later, but a number of others occurred which have escaped my memory. I merely wish to give specimens of the nature of the complaints which were frequently made. They were, without exception, of the most trumpery description.



men, but he had no doubt whatever that he did dislike us.

I very soon came to the conclusion that a sharp conflict was inevitable. It is, however, generally bad diplomacy to force on a conflict even when it seems inevitable. It sometimes happens that, after all, the forecast of the most qualified observers is erroneous, and that no acute conflict occurs at all. In the particular case in point, it would have been singularly unwise to have provoked a quarrel. It was so easy for hostile, or even for friendly but ill-informed critics to invert the true order in which events would develop. All the jargon and catchwords of modern democracy were on the side of the Khedive. The powerful Government, acting on the side of right and in the true interests of a whole population, could readily be made to appear unjust, arbitrary and tyrannical, whilst the world would hesitate to believe that the weak Government, which was its opponent, was making an abusive use of its weakness, and, amidst many flowers of rhetoric, was in reality pleading the cause of oppression and misgovernment in Egypt. My course was, therefore, clearly traced out for me. The more certain the ultimate crisis, the more evident was the necessity for extreme moderation in order to avoid any suspicion that a crisis was provoked. On the other hand, if the British Government

was forced into a conflict, it was essential that they should come out of it victorious. Diplomacy should be conducted on the principles laid down by Polonius for the guidance of his son.

On my return to Egypt, therefore, I adopted an attitude of studied moderation. To the despair of many of the British officials, I yielded on several minor points as to which they thought, with some reason, that they ought to have been more vigorously supported. I was well aware that this conciliatory spirit would be mistaken for weakness, that it would fail to conciliate, and that it would, on the contrary, afford encouragement to the commission of some flagrant act of hostility, which would ultimately necessitate strong action being taken. Nevertheless, the adoption of this attitude had, from my point of view, the great advantage that public opinion would be prepared for a conflict, and that, when the conflict eventually came, I should be in a far better position to deal with it by reason of the patience displayed in the preliminary skirmishes. It is almost always better for any one in a responsible position to be accused of undue patience than to run the risk of being charged with undue precipitancy. In this particular case, I had not long to wait before a conflict was forced upon me.

Towards the end of December, Mustapha

Pasha Fehmi was seized with an attack of congestion of the lungs. The English physician who attended him assured me that his life was in the greatest danger. It became, therefore, necessary to consider what should be done in the event of his death. On December 29, I telegraphed to Lord Rosebery :

In a conversation which Sir Elwin Palmer has had with the Khedive, the arrangements were discussed which, in the not improbable event of the Prime Minister's death, will become necessary. Riaz Pasha would be the best man to appoint, as he is the only influential Mohammedan. But the Khedive, unfortunately, very much dislikes Riaz Pasha personally, and to force His Highness to nominate him would be useless. Judging from their characters, they would, before long, be sure to quarrel. . . . Direct interference on my part will not, I think, become necessary, and I propose, as far as possible, to stand aside unless the Khedive should desire to make an appointment which is highly objectionable. With the exception of Tigrane Pasha, whom I do not wish to see named, it matters little whom the Khedive appoints.

My reasons for not wishing to see Tigrane Pasha appointed were twofold. In the first place, I felt certain that he would adopt an Anglophobe policy. In the second place, I thought that, as an Armenian and a Christian, he would be unable to control Mohammedan opinion. In discussing the matter with the Khedive, I naturally laid greater stress on the second than

on the first of these two arguments. On January 1, 1893, Lord Rosebery telegraphed to me that he agreed with me in thinking that it would, if possible, be advisable to avoid nominating Tigrane Pasha to succeed Mustapha Pasha Fehmi. "But," he added, "I would not push opposition too far if the Khedive is set on Tigrane." I entirely concurred in this view. On January 2, I saw the Khedive. I advised him not to nominate Tigrane Pasha, but did not place an absolute veto on his nomination. I left the Khedive with the impression that my arguments had produced little or no effect, and that, in the event of Mustapha Pasha's death, Tigrane Pasha would be selected to fill his place.

In the meanwhile, the importance of the question had greatly diminished. Mustapha Pasha Fehmi took a turn for the better; in a few days his life was out of danger. I thought that there was no longer any question of a change of Ministry. Suddenly, on January 15—that is to say, thirteen days after my last interview with the Khedive—his Private Secretary called on me and informed me that Mustapha Pasha Fehmi had been dismissed from his post and Fakhry Pasha appointed in his place. I subsequently ascertained that the Khedive's Turkish Secretary had pressed his way into Mustapha Pasha's room, and had urged him to resign

office. The sick man, who, although recovering, was far too ill to enter into any discussion on political affairs, gave his headstrong master some sensible advice, which he would have done well to have followed. He said that before anything was definitely decided, the Khedive had better "consult Lord Cromer." Then the cry of outraged and indignant patriotism rose from those who were strutting on the political stage of Cairo. No words were sufficiently strong to condemn Mustapha Pasha's conduct. He was a traitor to his sovereign and to his country. He was pusillanimous. He was I know not what besides. Had he not, in using the very reprehensible words which I have quoted above, as good as recognised that he held office, not at the will of the Khedive, but at that of the representative of a foreign Power? No punishment short of instant dismissal could be meted out to a Minister guilty of so heinous an offence. Mustapha Pasha Fehmi was accordingly dismissed at once, as also were the Ministers of Finance and of Justice, whose sole offence consisted in having co-operated heartily with the British officials attached to their respective departments. The whole affair was conducted with a studied want of consideration towards the dismissed Ministers. The Minister of Finance, a man of some eighty years of age, as also the Minister of Justice, were left

to learn of their dismissal from subordinates in their offices, or from acquaintances whom they chanced to meet in the streets.

The reason why Tigrane Pasha had not been nominated to succeed Mustapha Pasha was that he declined office. He was aware that he could not form a Ministry which would present any of the elements of durability. But Fakhry Pasha was Tigrane Pasha's *alter ego*. It was not so much the fact of his nomination, as the manner in which he had been nominated, which was open to objection. If the Khedive had consulted me previously, I should not—more especially in view of the state of Mustapha Pasha's health, which rendered a prolonged period of rest desirable—have made any strong objections to his nominating Fakhry, or, indeed, any other Pasha. But the whole affair had been planned and executed without my being taken into council. It was impossible to acquiesce in a *coup d'état*, which swept all the Anglophile Ministers out of the Cabinet, and which was manifestly intended to deal a decisive blow to British influence.

On the afternoon of January 15, I called on the Khedive and stated my objections to the course which he had pursued. From his language I gathered that it would be difficult to get him to retrace his steps, but I obtained from him a promise that the new Ministers should not be

officially gazetted until I had had time to communicate with Lord Rosebery.

In my telegram to Lord Rosebery, after stating the facts of the case, I added :

The whole situation, not only of the English officials here, but also of the English Government, will be changed if the Khedive is permitted to act as he has done in this matter, and much trouble will be the result. A struggle with the Khedive is, as I have for some while foreseen, inevitable, and it is not advisable to delay it. I think that this opportunity for bringing matters to a head should be taken.

The Khedive has adopted his present attitude, acting, I have excellent reasons for believing, to a great extent on the erroneous belief that Her Majesty's present Government will not support me so fully as the late one did.

It would, I think, be useless for Your Lordship merely to advise. I would suggest your sending me a telegram which I could show to His Highness, distinctly stating that in such important matters as a change of Prime Minister, Her Majesty's Government expect that he should consult them, that at the present time a change appears to be both undesirable and unnecessary, and that the proposed nomination of Fakhry Pasha cannot be sanctioned by Her Majesty's Government. Authority should be given to me to take, if need be, any steps, which may become necessary, to prevent a change.

It is also the wish of the Khedive to appoint other Ministers of Justice and Finance, and I would not oppose these changes.

I would most strongly impress the importance of the present issue on Her Majesty's Government. If they permit the Khedive to win in this case, it will no longer

be possible to continue the system which for the last ten years I have carried out, and it is very probable that the Egyptian question, in perhaps an objectionable form, may be prematurely thrust upon us. If, however, we once give the Khedive a lesson, it is probable that no further troubles will arise.

The Khedive kept his promise not to publish the official gazette nominating the new Ministers until I had had time to communicate with London, but they were allowed to go to their respective offices. I responded by directing the superior British officials not to recognise the Ministers until they received permission from me to do so. This measure caused great indignation amongst the friends and supporters of the Khedive.

On the 16th a Cabinet Council was held in London, with the result that the following telegram was sent to me :

Her Majesty's Government expect to be consulted in such important matters as a change of Ministers. No change appears to be at present either necessary or peremptory. We cannot, therefore, sanction the proposed nomination of Fakhry Pasha.

I was authorised to communicate this message to the Khedive and at the same time I was instructed not to take any further steps without again referring to London.

I saw the Khedive early on the morning of the 17th, and reported my interview to Lord Rosebery in the following terms :



I went to the Palace this morning and communicated a copy of Your Lordship's telegram to the Khedive. I informed His Highness at the same time that if Mustapha Pasha was reinstated as Prime Minister, I would not object to the appointment of Mazloun and Boutros as Ministers of Justice and Finance. I told him that I felt it would be unjust of me to press for an answer immediately, and that I would, unless His Highness sent for me before, call to receive his answer to-morrow morning. There was still, I added, time to yield, and it was my earnest hope that he would take this course, as, if he did not do so, the matter might take a more serious and complicated turn. Nothing which the Khedive said gave any indication of the nature of the reply which he intended to give.

During this period I had, of course, kept myself informed of the attitude taken up by the foreign representatives, more especially those of France and Russia. Whether the French and Russian Consuls-General had been privy to the recent *coup d'état*, was open to doubt, but it was not in any degree doubtful that for a long time past their language had been of a nature to encourage the Khedive in his resistance to England. Directly, however, affairs began to take a serious turn, they became alarmed. I telegraphed to Lord Rosebery that the French Consul-General had informed one of my Secretaries that "neither he nor Moukhtar Pasha had been in any way privy to the recent change of Ministry, that he had visited the Khedive that morning, but had

declined to advise His Highness as to the course which he should adopt."

As to the Russian Consul-General, I felt certain from the first that I could cast an infallible horoscope of his political attitude. Russia was prepared to drive pins into England in order to please the French, but was not inclined to risk a serious quarrel out of sheer love for the Franco-Russian alliance. The Khedive was, therefore, isolated. His fair-weather friends had abandoned him. With a little determination we should be able to dictate our own terms.

On a survey of the whole situation, I thought it advisable, if possible, to settle the matter locally, without the necessity arising of further reference to London. The only way to achieve this object was not to insist on the demand that Mustapha Pasha Fehmi should be reinstated. There were, moreover, two fairly valid arguments in favour of yielding on this point. The first was that he was still so ill that some considerable time would certainly have elapsed before he would have been able to resume his work. An opportunity of re-employing him was sure to occur before long.<sup>1</sup> The second was that it might perhaps be wise not to humiliate the young Khedive unduly. If

<sup>1</sup> As a matter of fact, Mustapha Pasha Fehmi was named Minister for War in the spring of 1894, and became once more Prime Minister in the autumn of 1895.

he were treated generously, all excuse for future misbehaviour would be removed.

On the afternoon of the 17th, Tigrane Pasha and Boutros Pasha called on me. Their object was to endeavour to come to some arrangement in anticipation of my visit to the Khedive on the following morning. After a good deal of discussion I agreed to the following terms. Mustapha Pasha Fehmi was not to resume office. Fakhry Pasha was to be dismissed. Riaz Pasha was to be appointed Prime Minister. Further, and this was a point to which I attached great importance, the Khedive was to make to me a formal declaration in terms which I myself dictated. He was to say that he "was most anxious to cultivate the most friendly relations with England, and that he would always most willingly adopt the advice of Her Majesty's Government on all questions of importance in the future."

On the next morning, I called on the Khedive. Matters were settled in conformity with the arrangement made on the previous evening. The crisis, in so far as it was ministerial, was thus ended. Neither party had gained a decisive victory. A compromise had been effected.

I have now to relate the sequel of the crisis.

## CHAPTER III

### THE SEQUEL OF THE CRISIS

JANUARY 1893

Position of English parties—Attitude of foreign Governments—  
Riaz Pasha's attitude—Ferment in Egypt—I ask for re-  
inforcements—The Government complies with the request—  
Lord Rosebery declares the policy of the Government—  
Comments on his action.

THE dismissal of Fakhry Pasha was warmly applauded by the united press of England. The position of English parties was at this time somewhat peculiar. The Government majority in the House of Commons was only about forty. An important section of the Liberal party, whilst ready to follow Mr. Gladstone's guidance in respect to internal affairs, was disposed to support the foreign policy of Lord Salisbury. For some years previously the influence of what used to be known as the Manchester, or peace-at-any-price, school had been waning. This school had been created by Cobden, and was the natural outcome of the rebound from the somewhat aggressive

attitude and excessive interference in the affairs of continental nations, which characterised the foreign policy of Lord Palmerston. Experience had shown that a policy of complete isolation was detrimental to British interests, and might even be fraught with more danger to the peace of the world than one of undue interference. A happy and rational mean between the two extremes had been found by Lord Salisbury, whose foreign policy was approved by many Liberals, and was even vaunted by Mr. Gladstone himself. More than this, the defeats which British arms and policy had of late years sustained in South Africa, and, still more, the mismanagement of the affairs of the Soudan, had left a deep impression on the mind of the British nation. It was discovered that the indecision of a weak Government, which did not know its own mind, might be more dangerous to the interests of peace than the decisive action of a relatively strong Government, which allowed all the world to know that the dignified and rational defence of British interests abroad formed an essential part of its political programme. A breach of the peace in the Soudan had been caused by an excessive desire to throw off legitimate responsibilities which might perhaps have led to warlike operations. A stern recognition of facts was better than the most pacific intentions. Recent experience had shown

that it was wiser to steer the ship of state than to allow her to drift rudderless down a dangerous channel. Thus, the school of Liberal Imperialism came into being. The Liberal Imperialists looked to Lord Rosebery as their leader. It was thought that, at the General Election of 1892, many waverers had decided to vote for the Gladstonian candidate on reflecting that, under Lord Rosebery's guidance, a foreign policy of which they could approve would be adopted.

The approval of the friendly Powers of Europe was not less warm than that of the British press. The Italian Minister for Foreign Affairs congratulated the British Ambassador at Rome "on the firmness with which the foolish attempt of the Khedive to thwart English policy in Egypt by his ministerial changes had been met by Her Majesty's Government"; whilst at Vienna, Count Kalnoky told Sir Augustus Paget that "it was a very good thing that it should be brought home to the world in general that, no matter what government was in power in England, the policy of Her Majesty's Government as regards Egypt would remain unchanged."

The French Government, indeed, made a rather half-hearted protest. M. Waddington objected to "the high-handed nature of the proceedings," which, he feared, "would be taken throughout Europe, as in France, to be a long

step in the direction of actual annexation," a remark to which Lord Rosebery, with much spirit, replied that "he was aware that there had been some high-handedness ; but that it had been on the part of the Khedive, who, without notice, warning, or consultation, had selected as his Prime Minister a person notoriously unfitted for the position."

At Constantinople, Sir Clare Ford reported, there was "a desire amongst the high officials of the Porte to accept the situation quietly." Somewhat later, however, when, as I shall presently show, the British garrison of Cairo was increased, the Sultan became "exceedingly angry, particularly as he had lately been boasting to his entourage that a complete evacuation would shortly follow." Whatever the cause of the Sultan's anger might be, the practical effect on his mind appears to have been identical under all circumstances. "His Majesty," Sir Clare Ford reported, "is now quite undecided as to the attitude he will assume, and is at a loss what to do."

On the whole, therefore, Mr. Gladstone's Government had greatly improved its position. The British nation, as well as foreign Powers, had been shown that, in case of need, a Liberal Government could act with vigour. The Liberal Imperialist was strengthened in his allegiance to

his party. Liberals boasted that it must now be clear to all the world that their political opponents did not monopolise whatever talent the country possessed for dealing with foreign affairs. Moderate men of all parties were gratified at the turn affairs had taken. Hostile critics abroad muttered a few protests, but, as is generally the case, hesitated to take any action in the face of the firm front which was apparently shown to them.

It soon became clear that a mistake had been made in appointing Riaz Pasha to be Prime Minister. Yet at the time, the arguments in favour of his nomination appeared to be weighty. I thought that the wisest thing to do was not to run strongly counter to the Mohammedan movement, which the recent behaviour of the Khedive had evoked, but rather to attempt to guide it. The choice of guides was, however, very limited. The Gallicised Egyptian would carry no weight with the Mohammedans. Amongst the turbaned classes, not one could be found of sufficient education and experience to be raised to the rank of Minister. A retrograde Pasha of the thoroughgoing Turkish school was out of the question. He would have quarrelled with every European official in the country, whilst, at the same time, he would not have commanded the sympathies of the natives. Practically, if the experiment



of guiding the Mohammedan movement was to be tried, the choice was limited to Riaz Pasha. He was less European than the Gallicised Egyptian or the Armenian. He was, as I hoped and believed, less Mohammedan than his Moslem followers. He had already been Prime Minister more than once. He knew, or should have known, the danger of encouraging the Arabist ideas, which were beginning to show themselves again under the new title of Khedivialism. He had seen his country in the throes of a rebellion, which had been quelled by the military intervention of England. He was influential, and if he used his influence in a statesmanlike manner and endeavoured to conciliate conflicting interests, it was conceivable that a real step forward might be made in the direction of Egyptian autonomy.

Any hopes I had entertained of Riaz Pasha's acting wisely were soon dashed to the ground. Instead of urging the young Khedive to act with prudence, and instead of guiding him along the path of conciliation, Riaz Pasha applauded his recent conduct, and encouraged him to act in opposition to England. On January 19, an interview took place between Riaz Pasha and Sir Elwin Palmer, to whom Riaz Pasha spoke more freely than he did to me. I telegraphed to Lord Rosebery :

Sir Elwin Palmer concluded that His Excellency purposed siding entirely with the Khedive, and he was much dissatisfied with the Prime Minister's language. Riaz Pasha stated, in the course of conversation, that the Khedive's conduct had immensely raised him in the popular estimation, and that all the Egyptians were now on his side ; this is probably true as far as the Pasha class is concerned.

During the reign of Tewfik ministerial changes had often occurred, which had set the quidnuncs of Cairo talking. On these occasions any ephemeral excitement soon died out. It was clear, however, that in this instance popular excitement had penetrated below the quidnunc surface. An Egyptian friend of mine remarked that the situation was similar to that at the commencement of the Arabi movement, with the difference that the Khedive was regarded as the leader. Every Pasha who had been deprived of his privileges or curbed in the exercise of his ill-used power, every fanatic Moslem who cursed the Giaour in his heart, every unsuccessful place-hunter, every corrupt employé whose illicit gains had been curtailed by British control, every feather-headed young Egyptian who thought himself of equal if not of superior mental calibre to his British official superior, rallied round the foolish youth, who—probably without being fully aware of it—had raised the standard of revolt against Western civilisation. The Gallicised

Egyptian, who posed as a reformer, joined hands with the retrograde Pasha, who sighed for the days when the country was governed by the courbash and by corruption. The events which had recently taken place were sedulously misrepresented by the Anglophobe press. The Khedive, it was said, had obtained a decisive victory. The fact that he had given a solemn promise to conform to English advice for the future was stoutly denied. An angry demonstration, accompanied by some violence, was made before the office of the *Mokattam*, an Anglophile native newspaper. Meetings took place in the provinces in which violently anti-European language was used. Deputations came to Cairo to congratulate the Khedive on his patriotic attitude. The Europeans became alarmed. The local banks began to refuse credit.

In spite of all these outward and visible signs, the movement was in reality hollow and fictitious. The poor, ignorant village sheikhs who, at the bidding of the Pashas, congratulated the Khedive on his resistance to the Englishman, were all the time devoutly hoping that the Englishman would stand firm against the Khedive and save them from a relapse into the abuses of the past. There was scarcely a man in the country who would not have been dismayed if the British Government had taken the Pashas at their word and with-

drawn its soldiers from Egypt. To the Western mind it would appear difficult for the same individual to be at once a patriot who wished the British soldiers to leave the country, and an advocate of good government who wished them to remain. I have dwelt to little purpose on the inconsistencies of Eastern character if I have not convinced the readers of *Modern Egypt* that the performance of this extraordinary intellectual feat is possible to some Egyptians.

But although the movement was but skin deep in the sense that some ten millions of voiceless Egyptians failed to sympathise with it, it was eminently mischievous. If unchecked, it might lead to serious trouble. Given a few unscrupulous leaders in contact with an ignorant and credulous population, and the result was difficult to foretell. Moreover, the unreality of the whole thing was only apparent to those who had some real knowledge of the country. Any one at a distance, or even an ill-informed observer on the spot, might well be deceived by the pseudo-patriotism of which so liberal a display was made. Pashas represented ideas diametrically opposed to those of the Egyptian people, but whereas the latter were silent by reason either of ignorance or fear, the former were extremely noisy and shouted not only in Arabic, but in the purest Parisian French. It was easy, therefore, for a casual observer to

confound the voice of Pashadom and the Egyptian *vox populi*.

Before applying a remedy it was essential to ascertain the true character of the disease. For my own part I had no doubt whatever that we were suffering from a hardy belief that the existing Government in England was about to relax its hold on Egypt. This being the nature of the disease, the remedy was simple. An increase of the British garrison would serve the double purpose of preserving public tranquillity, which was seriously threatened, and of calming the troubled political waters by showing that local opinion had wholly misunderstood the attitude of the British Government.

On January 19, therefore, I telegraphed to Lord Rosebery :

Although I am satisfied with the Khedive's language and demeanour, I am at the same time uneasy about the local situation. Riaz Pasha has, I understand, lately become very religious, and would thus be predisposed to act in a fanatic and anti-European spirit. From having before felt a strong aversion for Riaz Pasha, the Khedive may now, perhaps, be attracted by his arbitrary character, and the two may unite against England. In this case trouble will follow.

The Khedive was visited yesterday by a large number of natives. Although this demonstration was in part prearranged, and although the Khedive has gained no real popularity, but very little is wanted to place him in the position of an anti-foreign and anti-Christian Egyptian patriot. That portion of the press which

represents ultra-Mohammedan feeling has assumed a very violent and mischievous tone.

In the opinion of General Walker and myself, the British garrison is too weak. I should wish to announce at once an increase of the garrison. Nothing which Her Majesty's Government could say or do would, I am convinced, have so much effect in preventing more trouble as the immediate adoption of this proposal, which I recommend strongly. I am anxious to announce the increase before there is time for the Khedive or Riaz Pasha to commit any further foolish acts.

After some further correspondence had passed, I had the satisfaction on January 23 of receiving the following telegram :

Her Majesty's Government have, in view of recent occurrences, and of the opinion expressed by you, and by the British General in command, determined to reinforce the British garrison in Egypt. I have to request you to make the announcement to the Khedive and his Prime Minister, without, however, assigning any reason for the measure.

The effect of this announcement was instantaneous.<sup>1</sup> The attitude of Riaz Pasha changed. He made some efforts to allay the excitement which his former conduct had contributed to evoke. The anti-European agitation

<sup>1</sup> An infantry battalion happened at this moment to be passing through the Suez Canal on its way from India to England. It was ordered to land in Egypt. Twenty-four hours after the announcement that the garrison would be increased had been made, this battalion marched into Cairo. The rapidity with which the troops appeared immediately after the announcement produced a good effect.

which was proceeding in the provinces was checked. The Europeans, and the large but quiescent body of well-disposed natives, were reassured. Every one felt that the British Government had given a strong indication that there was a limit to its patience, and that, in case of need, it would act in the interests of civilisation.

Shortly afterwards, Lord Rosebery wrote a despatch, which was published, setting forth the views of the Government on Egyptian affairs. After alluding to recent events, this able State paper concluded in the following terms :

Should further difficulties arise, it might be urged that the conditions of the British occupation will have changed, and it may be asked whether altered circumstances do not require a corresponding modification of policy, whether the occupation should be maintained in opposition, as it might seem, to the sentiment of important sections of the inhabitants, and whether it would not be better that it should cease.

To this view, however, certain elementary considerations oppose themselves. Firstly, it is necessary to consider the important interests, and indeed, the safety, of the large European community in Egypt. Secondly, it is by no means clear that the real feeling, even of the native population in the country, is otherwise than friendly and grateful, although it may be difficult to elicit any public or decisive expression of it. It would not be right or proper that the policy of this country, based on considerations of permanent importance, should be modified in deference to hasty personal impulse or to ephemeral agitation among certain classes.

Thirdly, it seems impossible lightly, and on the first appearance of difficulties, to retire from the task which was publicly undertaken in the general interest of Europe and civilisation, and to abandon the results of ten years of successful effort in that direction. And, fourthly, the withdrawal of the British troops under such circumstances would too probably result in a speedy return to the former corrupt and defective systems of administration, and be followed by a relapse into confusion which would necessitate a fresh intervention under still more difficult circumstances, though it is not now necessary to discuss the particular form which that intervention might assume.

All these considerations point to the conclusion that for the present there is but one course to pursue ; that we must maintain the fabric of administration which has been constructed under our guidance, and must continue the process of construction, without impatience, but without interruption, of an administrative and judicial system, which shall afford a reliable guarantee for the future welfare of Egypt.

Circumstances might, indeed, occur of the nature I have indicated, which might render it necessary to consider the expediency of fresh consultations with the Suzerain and with the European Powers.

It would serve no useful purpose to discuss at this moment the proposals which it might, in that case, be desirable to bring forward, nor need we attempt to forecast the result. But this at least may be laid down with absolute certainty : that Egypt would in no case be released from European control, which might possibly be asserted in a much more stringent and irksome form than at present. The contingency is not immediate, but we are forced to a clearer contemplation of it by recent occurrences. On the other hand, it is impossible not to see how seriously those occurrences impair the security for order, justice, and good government which



Her Majesty's Government have always declared, and which the Sultan and the European Powers have equally admitted to be a necessary preliminary to the withdrawal of the British troops from Egypt.

Lord Rosebery had deserved well of his country and of Egypt. He had placed Egyptian affairs on as sound and statesmanlike a footing as was possible under the difficult circumstances of the situation. He had scattered to the winds the idea that a speedy evacuation, regardless of the consequences, was contemplated. He had let all concerned know that a great nation cannot lightly throw off responsibilities which it has solemnly assumed in the face of the world.

On January 26 I telegraphed to Lord Rosebery :

The lesson which the Khedive has now received will, I am of opinion, cause His Highness to be very careful in his conduct for the present.

I was so far right that a year elapsed before the Khedive's smothered hostility to England burst again into a flame. A second lesson had then to be administered. I have now to deal with the episode which formed the subject of this second lesson.

## CHAPTER IV

### THE RIAZ AND NUBAR MINISTRIES

JANUARY 1893—NOVEMBER 1895

Attitude of Riaz Pasha—The Khedive's visit to Constantinople—Obstruction in Egypt—Nomination of Maher Pasha to the War Office—The Khedive visits Upper Egypt—His conduct at Wadi Halfa—Gravity of the situation—Lord Rosebery's instructions—Attitude of France and Russia—The Khedive yields—Riaz Pasha resigns office—Nubar Pasha forms a Cabinet—Failure of the Riaz experiment—Mustapha Pasha Fehmi succeeds Nubar Pasha—Experience gained by the Khedive—Correspondence with Lord Rosebery.

"THE situation in the immediate future," I telegraphed to Lord Rosebery on January 27, 1893, "depends mainly on the influence which Riaz Pasha is able to exercise over the Khedive's mind."

As time went on two points came out more clearly day by day. The first was that Riaz Pasha was either unwilling or unable to influence the Khedive in the sense of mitigating his hostility to England. The second was that the order of things which I had hoped to see established was inverted. It was not Riaz Pasha

who influenced the Khedive. It was rather the Khedive and his mischievous surroundings who influenced Riaz Pasha.

During the reign of Ismail Pasha, Riaz Pasha had to deal with a situation which he thoroughly understood. He showed a high degree of courage and real statesmanship. Neither should the nature of the services he then rendered his country be in any way obscured by the events which I am now narrating. In 1893, he was dealing with a situation which he understood only very imperfectly.

Riaz Pasha had not, indeed, the political insight to deal with a situation which, it must be admitted, was beset with many difficulties. He was torn by conflicting emotions. He was anti-European, in the very legitimate sense that he wished to reduce European control over the Egyptian administration to a minimum, but he feared to give a loose rein to his real sentiments. He trifled with Moslem fanaticism, and was then alarmed at the consequences of his own acts. He disliked the English, but he preferred to fall into the hands of England rather than into those of France. He detested parliamentary institutions, but he nevertheless encouraged the Egyptian mock Parliament to assert its position and to attack England. He feared the consequences of restoring to the Khedive the personal

power which had been so grievously abused by Ismail Pasha, but he abstained from opposing the caprices of his youthful master. He detested Arabist ideas, yet he allowed himself to drift into an unnatural alliance with those who he must have known were in reality struggling for the supremacy of the Egyptian over the Turco-Egyptian elements of native society. He wished every European official to leave the country, but he was at every turn obliged to admit that he could not dispense with European assistance. A free press was an abomination to him, yet, directly or indirectly, he encouraged the extreme of licence amongst the most pernicious class of journalists.

His acts gave fitting expression to the confusion which existed in his mind. He was constantly moving in an anti-European direction, and was then, under the stress of circumstances, obliged to retrace his steps. He refused to allow Sir John Scott and other British officials to attend the meetings of the Council of Ministers ; immediately afterwards, he was forced to sign a document which reversed his former decision. At one moment, he issued a petulant circular which virtually directed all local officials to abstain from communication with the British officers of police ; immediately afterwards, he issued another circular which flatly contradicted

his previous orders. At one moment, he encouraged fanatical journalists to attack England; at the next moment, he paid money to the most fanatical journalist in the country to desist from the publication of his newspaper and to leave Egypt.

The only incident of importance which occurred during the summer of 1893 was the Khedive's visit to Constantinople. He was accompanied by Tigrane Pasha. Great things were expected from this visit. The Khedive had begun his reign as a Turcophobe. Under the influence of Anglophobia he now veered round to the opposite pole of the political compass. He endeavoured to enlist Turkish sympathies on his side. He appealed to the Sultan to deliver him from the burthen of the British yoke. He represented the hardship of the British occupation, and made complaints, as indiscriminate as they were for the most part baseless, against the British officials in Egypt. Simultaneously with this action, Tigrane Pasha went the rounds of the foreign embassies and waxed eloquent in pleading the cause of his adopted country. A deputation of Egyptian sheikhs went to Constantinople with the object of presenting a petition to the Sultan in his quality of Khalif. "We hereby implore you, O Khalif," they said, "to consider our position with the stranger who, under specious

pretexts, has established himself in our country, and persists in encumbering our sacred soil with his abhorred presence after many fallacious promises to quit it."

The mission was a complete failure. "The Sultan," the British *Chargé d'Affaires* at Constantinople reported, "counselled the Khedive in a fatherly way to resign himself to his fate, and trust to time, keeping on good terms with the English." Meanwhile, Tigrane Pasha "was sent for by the Sultan and warned not to follow a line of policy which might in any way create embarrassments or difficulties, nor advise the Khedive to do so." The result was that Tigrane Pasha's attitude completely changed. He expressed an earnest desire to work well with the English, and told the Italian Ambassador at Constantinople that "the Khedive's visit had completely dispelled any illusions which he might have harboured before his arrival." "On all hands," Sir Arthur Nicolson, the *Chargé d'Affaires*, reported, "the Sultan is represented as thoroughly frightened of England, and his refusal to accede to the Khedive's wishes is prompted by fear."

As to the petition of the Sheikhs and Notables, the Sultan, for obvious reasons, disliked popular demonstrations of any kind. "The Notables," Sir Arthur Nicolson wrote, "are even more

discontented than the Khedive. The object of their mission completely failed, while, if my informant be correct, their movements were hampered and watched to a degree which irritated them exceedingly. They were never admitted to the presence of the Sultan—for when in Yildiz Garden they were not allowed near the Imperial Kiosk—their petition remained in its cover, and they were even prohibited from seeing or living near the Khedive.”

Whatever may have been the Sultan’s motives, there can be no doubt that the Notables deserved the treatment they received. This petition was, in fact, one of the most farcical episodes in the whole anti-English comedy. An aged sheikh, who was known to be an Anglophile, was asked why he had signed the petition. He smiled, and answered : “ It is all empty words. I often say to my camel or to my horse, if in some trifling way he tries my patience, ‘ Curses on you ! May Allah strike you dead, oh son of a pig ! ’ If I thought it would really happen I should be silent ; but I know that the beast will remain unharmed. So also I know that the English will stay here, whether I sign a petition or not. What does it matter then ? I please our lord, the Khedive ; the English remain all the same and look after my interests, and every one is happy all round.”

It cannot be doubted that many of the signatories of the petition shared the views of this opportunist sheikh.

Thus the only result of the Khedive's visit to Constantinople was to convince him that no help was to be expected from that quarter. He went a militant, he returned a sullen and somewhat chastened Anglophobe. I had anticipated that the result of the visit would be something of this sort, and, therefore, did nothing to discourage it, although it had been suggested to me that I ought to do so.

I went to England early in July. When I returned in October the political barometer gave unmistakable signs of a coming storm. In every department of the state friction, in a more or less acute stage, showed itself between the Egyptian Ministers and the Anglo-Egyptian officials. The Egyptians were hostile and obstructive. The Englishmen resented the opposition which they had to encounter. Their resentment was natural, but they scarcely made sufficient allowance for the difficulties of the situation.

The special form which the opposition now assumed rendered it difficult to combat. When any clear issue arose, my intervention was invited, and I was generally able to arrive at some fairly satisfactory solution of the point under discussion. But it was impossible to interfere in every petty



detail of the administration. The greater part of the opposition was intangible, but was not, on that account, the less mischievous. The work of reform was obstructed in a thousand petty ways. For, in fact, almost all the officials in the country, from the highest to the lowest, formed part of the anti-English league. Not that they were all, or nearly all, Anglophobes. Far from it. The reason for their conduct must be sought in the fact that their prospects of advancement depended on whether they stood well with the Khedive and with Riaz Pasha. Both of these high authorities allowed it to be understood that none but pronounced Anglophobes would find favour in their sight. The Khedive displayed the utmost hostility to all who showed cordiality to British officials or a desire to assist them in their work. Sheikhs and Omdehs, who came to pay their respects at the Palace, were singled out by the Khedive and publicly abused as "friends of the English." One influential landowner in Upper Egypt was forbidden ever to set his foot in the Palace again, and told that, as he had thrown in his lot with the English, he had better associate only with them. His sole offence was that he had been on good terms with some British police officers.

It was clear that this state of things could not last. I had, however, no wish to precipitate a

crisis. I listened to all the complaints of the English officials, but I determined to choose my own battle-ground in the struggle which was obviously impending. It was necessary that the quarrel should be brought to a head over an issue which would, on the one hand, be comprehensible to the British public, and, on the other hand, would afford no justifiable grounds for the intervention of any foreign Powers. Knowing the characters of those with whom I had to deal, I felt convinced that, if I had the patience to wait, the folly of my opponents would afford me some suitable opportunity for striking a decisive blow. They did not belie my anticipations.

During my absence in England Maher Pasha was named Under-Secretary of the War Department. Directly I heard of his nomination I felt sure that troubles were ahead. The Khedive had already shown great want of judgment in dealing with military matters. Maher Pasha, who possessed the Khedive's confidence, set himself to work to undermine the authority of General Kitchener, the Commander-in-Chief of the Egyptian army.<sup>1</sup>

Early in January 1894, the Khedive went up the Nile, accompanied by Maher Pasha. A short

<sup>1</sup> Like a good many other Egyptian officials, Maher Pasha soon learnt that his Anglophobia was a mistake. He eventually obtained civil employment and worked cordially with the British officials.

time previously Moukhtar Pasha had inspected the native troops stationed at Assouan, Korosko, and Wadi Halfa. He was warm in his praises of their efficiency. The young Khedive, who was, of course, wholly ignorant of military matters, took a different view from the trained veteran who had commanded the splendid troops of his sovereign in time of war. He poured forth a stream of childish criticism on everything which he saw. He insulted British officers. He did his utmost to sow dissension in all the ranks of the army. Ultimately, affairs came to a head at Wadi Halfa. On January 19, General Kitchener telegraphed to me :

This afternoon His Highness the Khedive on parade made various observations disparaging to the English commanding officers, and afterwards said to me that it was in his opinion a disgrace that the Egyptian army should be so inefficient. I immediately tendered my resignation in respectful language. It has been evident to me and others ever since the Khedive arrived at the frontier that he has continually given expression to his dislike of almost all the English officers, and his language to-day has been the culminating point of a series of unjustified criticisms. I, therefore, felt unable to pass by His Highness' remarks reflecting on the Egyptian army without making a formal protest for their honour and credit. Thereupon the Khedive became very cordial, and begged me repeatedly to withdraw my resignation. I told His Highness that if English officers were to be rebuked in this public manner their position in this country would become almost untenable, and that if this

state of things continued I should be quite unable to obtain the services of competent officers in the Egyptian army. His Highness assured me that he had entire confidence in me, and I gave him to understand that I would not persist in my resignation, though I did not absolutely withdraw it.

The first thing which struck me on receipt of this telegram was the gravity of the incident which it narrated. If there is one point more than another, which an official and political training of the special kind which I have undergone impresses on the mind, it is the extreme folly and danger of trifling with the discipline of any body of armed men. This folly and this danger, great under any circumstances, are multiplied tenfold when the officers are Europeans and Christians, whilst the soldiers are African or Asiatic Moslems. The British officers had for the previous ten years been endeavouring by every means in their power to inculcate loyalty to the Khedive as the first duty of the Egyptian soldier. It was natural that they should do so. Their presence in Egypt was due to the fact that the Egyptian army had mutinied against the late Khedive. Suddenly, however, the tables were turned. The young Khedive had begun to encourage disloyalty and disobedience on the part of the soldiers towards their own officers. He thus struck at the root of military discipline. Neither did he stop there. The Egyptian army

is not homogeneous. It is composed partly of blacks and partly of fellaheen. A certain feeling of animosity had always existed between the two races. The Khedive, perhaps without being wholly conscious of what he was doing, did all in his power to fan this animosity into a flame. It is difficult to find language sufficiently condemnatory of behaviour of this sort. In the course of my experience I never recollect a case of misconduct on the part of any one in a high and responsible position more mischievous than that of the Khedive Abbas on this occasion.

The second point which struck me was that the opportunity for which I had been waiting had come. It would, indeed, have been difficult to choose a more favourable battle-ground. Even hostile critics admitted that the manner in which the British officers in Egypt had created an efficient army out of very unpromising material was beyond praise. It required no argument to show that the Khedive's personal opinion on the efficiency of the army was valueless. The memory of the events of 1882 was still fresh in the minds of the public. Any one of the least intelligence could see at a glance that it would be dangerous to allow the Khedive's career of headstrong folly to continue unchecked. So long as he played with his soldiers and merely interfered in details connected with the non-

essential parts of the military organisation, the tolerance which older men willingly accord to youth might well be extended to him, albeit his behaviour often caused a good deal of unnecessary trouble. But the utmost limit of generosity could not be made to palliate the conduct of a youth, who, out of sheer wantonness of spirit, encouraged a mutiny in his own army, and thus threatened to involve others in the consequences of his own folly. Englishmen would naturally resent his behaviour to British officers of whose work they were justly proud. Neither would his conduct commend itself to the French. The latter, indeed, were directly interested in exalting the efficiency of the native army. If the Egyptian military machine were shattered, one of the main arguments on which they relied for demonstrating the absence of any need of a British garrison in Egypt would disappear. The Sultan was in much the same position as the French. Those Powers who were friendly to the British occupation of the country would see in the Khedive's conduct an additional reason for its continuance. The Egyptian Ministers would be unable to defend the Khedive. Riaz Pasha, more especially, knew from personal experience something of the confusion which results from a mutiny in the army. However desirous he might be of affording support to the Anglophobe policy of the Khedive,

he would shrink from associating himself with conduct such as had now been revealed.

For these reasons, therefore, I felt not only that the Khedive richly deserved to be punished, and that it was in the interests of Europe and of Egypt that he should be severely punished, but also that by his own act he had placed himself in a position which rendered the infliction of adequate punishment a matter of no great difficulty. Nevertheless, every political situation, however advantageous it may at first sight appear, is attended with certain risks and dangers. The business of the politician and of the diplomatist is to estimate rightly the special risks and dangers which are associated with any special incident. Sometimes when the opportunity for striking occurs, it is unwise to exercise forbearance; a decisive blow should be given. The deposition of Ismail Pasha and the bombardment of Alexandria were cases in point drawn from the recent history of Egypt. At other times, the main point is to resist the temptation of striking too hard when the possibility of doing so presents itself. In January 1894, this temptation had, as I thought at the time, to be resisted. I felt that so long as a reasonable and moderate use of the occasion was made, much good might result, but that if the British Government attempted to abuse its position and to humble

the Khedive to the dust, it might defeat its own object. The Khedive and his surroundings would be sure to pervert the facts. English sympathies, which are always generous, would readily be enlisted on the side of the Khedive if any feeling got abroad that an inexperienced youth who, it would be represented, had at most been guilty of nothing more than an error of judgment, was being treated with undue harshness. Moreover, excessive severity would afford a good handle for the action of hostile foreign diplomacy, which, on the other hand, would be checkmated by moderation. In so far, therefore, as the decision lay with me, I resolved to insist on adequate, but not on unduly humiliating reparation.

I make these remarks because one of my main objects in writing on Egyptian affairs has been to give to those of my countrymen who may hereafter be engaged in Oriental administration or diplomacy a series of examples showing how questions such as those which have from time to time arisen in Egypt have been treated. I leave it to them to judge whether the treatment was or was not successful.

To resume my narrative. On January 20, I sent the following message to General Kitchener :

Your action has my entire approval. You may, if you think it advisable, tell the Khedive that I have learnt with great regret of the manner in which he has



spoken of the Egyptian army, whose efficiency is undoubted, and that I have reported the matter to the Foreign Office.

At the same time I telegraphed the main facts to Lord Rosebery. I suggested that Maher Pasha should be removed from the War Office, and that, if serious opposition were offered to this proposal, I should "as a last resource threaten that the Egyptian army would be put wholly under the officer commanding the army of occupation."

Lord Rosebery at once (January 21) replied in the following decisive terms :

I have received your telegram of the 20th instant reporting the disparaging remarks made by the Khedive to the Sirdar and the English officers commanding at Wadi Halfa on the state of the Egyptian army.

You will tell the Khedive that I regard this as very serious. It appears to have become a deliberate practice with His Highness to insult British officers. Her Majesty's Government cannot allow this. Even if they were to do so, the British nation would not. The removal of Maher Pasha, who is a bad adviser, a cause of strife, and an obstacle to harmonious co-operation, and the issue of an order of the day in commendation of British officers and the army is the only reparation which, in my opinion, the Khedive can make. In the event of his refusing to give just satisfaction, stringent measures must be considered, which will have the effect of placing the Egyptian army more directly under the control of the British Government, and will afford protection to British officers from injurious treatment. I should at the same time place the public here in a position to realise

the situation by publishing the various instances of insult which have recently occurred.<sup>1</sup>

On receipt of this telegram I sought an interview with Riaz and Tigrane Pashas. I explained to them the gravity of the incident, and demanded the removal of Maher Pasha and the issue of a laudatory order of the day to the army. They saw the folly of the Khedive's conduct, but they urged that the Khedive's language might possibly have been misunderstood. In reply I told them that I could hold out no hope that Her Majesty's Government would be satisfied with mere verbal explanations, and that the satisfaction proposed was the least that could be accepted.

The Ministers then telegraphed to the Khedive ; his answer was, very wisely, not shown to me. It was, without doubt, unsatisfactory. Riaz Pasha then determined to go himself to the Khedive and endeavour, by verbal communication, to come to an arrangement.

In the meanwhile Cairo was in a state of ferment. What attitude, it was asked, would the French and Russian Governments assume ? Their attitude was much what I had anticipated.

<sup>1</sup> In a private telegram addressed to me on January 21, Lord Rosebery said that the publication of the facts to which allusion is made would " cause an outbreak of fury " in England. The Khedive had, in fact, brought a number of frivolous and often impertinent complaints against British officers. The last instance was that of an officer who passed him in the middle of the night without saluting. The Khedive accused the officer of being drunk.

The French Consul-General came to me and endeavoured to obtain better terms for the Khedive. I told him that nothing less than the terms already demanded could be accepted. Both the French and Russian Consuls-General wished to avoid any open rupture between the British Government and the Khedive on a point as to which the latter was manifestly in the wrong. Their influence was, therefore, used on the side of conciliation.

The Khedive yielded. On January 26, he addressed a letter to the Sirdar, which was published in the *Official Journal*, and which unsaid all he had been saying for several weeks previously. He expressed his entire satisfaction with the condition of the army. "Il m'est agréable," he added, "de féliciter les officiers tant égyptiens qu'anglais qui la commandent, et je suis heureux de constater les services rendus par les officiers anglais à mon armée."

A few days later Maher Pasha was removed from the War Office, and appointed Governor of Port Said. A nominee of General Kitchener's succeeded him as Under-Secretary for War.

This "Frontier Incident," as it was called, brought about the downfall of the Riaz Ministry. So long as Riaz and his colleagues counselled unreasonable resistance to England, they acquired the fullest sympathies of the Khedive. Those

sympathies were at once alienated when, as in the frontier affair, they pointed out to him the folly of his conduct. During the next two months all the symptoms which are generally premonitory of a ministerial crisis in Cairo appeared. It became daily more and more clear that the Khedive was on bad terms with his Ministers. I could have prolonged the life of the Ministry if I had taken the initiative in affording it support. But I saw no sufficient reason for taking action of this description. Without doubt it appeared hard that the Ministers should fall by reason of the only wise act which they had committed during their tenure of office. But the Khedive's resentment against them was not altogether unjustifiable. His view of the matter was that they had first encouraged him to adopt an Anglophobe policy, and had then deserted him when the inevitable consequences of his Anglophobia were visited on his head. From my point of view, I did not consider that one friendly step, taken under compulsion, was enough to justify me in condoning a long course of previous enmity. I was well aware that if I did nothing the Ministry would almost certainly fall. I was glad that they should fall, but it seemed to me better that the impending change should to all outward appearances be the natural outcome of existing circumstances, rather than

that it should be caused by any overt act of mine. I, therefore, remained silent, and watched events.

On April 14, the Khedive sent for me and informed me that the Ministers had resigned.<sup>1</sup> In conformity with the promise given to the British Government in January 1893, he consulted me as to who should be Riaz Pasha's successor. I advised the appointment of Nubar Pasha. My advice was accepted. I insisted that Mustapha Pasha Fehmi and Ibrahim Pasha Fuad, both of whom had been so rudely dismissed from office in 1893, should form part of the new Cabinet. On the other hand, I intimated that I had no objection to Fakhry Pasha being included at the same time. After some little hesitation, these proposals were accepted.

I learnt one lesson from the failure of the Riaz experiment. That lesson is that it is useless to attempt to guide Moslem opinion in Egypt by Moslems of the type of Riaz Pasha. The experiment was, I think, worth trying. Had it succeeded, the local political situation might have been materially changed for the better. But the failure was complete. If it were tried again,

<sup>1</sup> There is very good reason to believe that, at a subsequent period, Riaz Pasha's views as regards the attitude to be adopted towards the British Government underwent a considerable change. In 1904 he made a speech, which caused much sensation at the time, in which he spoke in very laudatory terms of the progress made in Egypt under British auspices.

a second failure would almost certainly be the result. It is clear that the un-Europeanised Moslem is quite incapable of governing the Egypt of to-day. The ministerial future lies, therefore, with the Europeanised Egyptians of various types.

The history of Nubar Pasha's Ministry, which lasted eighteen months, may be told in a few lines. He was too much of a statesman not to be aware of the folly of the Khedive's conduct. He came into office avowedly as a Minister of conciliation. His efforts to conciliate the British and Egyptian officials were crowned with success. Several useful reforms, the most important of which was the reorganisation of the Ministry of the Interior, were accomplished under his auspices.

In the spring of 1895, Nubar Pasha met with a severe accident—the fracture of an ankle—which necessitated a prolonged absence from Egypt. He returned in November broken in health. His work had practically been accomplished. He expressed a very natural wish to retire from public life.<sup>1</sup> I am inclined to think that during those eighteen months of office, Nubar Pasha deserved the gratitude of his adopted country to a greater extent than at any previous period of his long official career.

From some points of view his retirement came

<sup>1</sup> Nubar Pasha died at Paris on January 14, 1899.

at a singularly opportune moment. The Khedive had been to Constantinople during the summer of 1895, and was incensed at the treatment he had received at the hands of the Sultan. Inexperienced as he was, he could not fail to see that nothing was to be obtained from the European agitators, of whom a certain M. Deloncle was the principal, and who had promised and vowed that the days of the British occupation were numbered. More than this, the Armenian question was under discussion. The attitude of the Powers, and notably of England, towards the Sultan was of a nature to afford a warning to the Sultan's vassal. Taking all these facts into consideration, it is perhaps no great matter for surprise that the Khedive adopted a comparatively friendly attitude and consented, without demur, to the nomination of the Anglophile Mustapha Fehmi to be Nubar Pasha's successor.

Experience, Shakespeare tells us, is a jewel, but he adds that it is often "purchased at an infinite rate." The Khedive paid highly, in the shape of loss of prestige and reputation, for the experience gained during the three years which immediately followed his succession. Nevertheless, that experience was of great benefit to him. He learnt that it was useless openly to resist British policy in Egypt.

There have been two turning-points in the

diplomatic history of the connection between Great Britain and Egypt since the occupation commenced in 1882. The first occurred in 1887 when, most fortunately for both British and Egyptian interests, the Sultan refused to ratify the Wolff Convention and thus relieved us of all the difficulties and embarrassment which would certainly have arisen from a premature evacuation of the country. The second was in 1894. Subsequent to the events narrated in this volume a good deal of trouble arose from time to time with Abbas II., but the battle for British supremacy was virtually fought and won during the eventful period when Lord Rosebery presided at the Foreign Office. The credit of the victory mainly lies with him, for without his cordial support I should have been quite powerless.

I cannot forbear from reproducing the following letters which we exchanged when, to my very great regret, Lord Rosebery left the Foreign Office. On March 9, 1894, he wrote to me :

MY DEAR CROMER—The sorrowful moment has come when I must say good-bye to you.

We have gone through stormy times together, and I have long come to the conclusion that you are a good man to go tiger-hunting with. I shall now only join in the sport from a tree or distant howdah, but I may yet be of use.

You know how well I wish you, and can guess how hard it is to cut the immediate bond that unites us.—  
Yours sincerely,  
ROSEBERY.



Almost simultaneously, that is to say on March 6, 1894, on learning that Lord Rosebery had become Prime Minister, I wrote the following letter :

MY DEAR LORD ROSEBERY—Assuming that what Reuter tells us is true, I do not know whether I ought to congratulate you or not, for possibly you may not consider the subject one for congratulation. In any case, the feeling uppermost in my mind is purely selfish, for it is one of deep regret that I shall no longer have the pleasure and privilege of serving under your immediate orders. I can never forget either the cordial support which you have given me officially, or the kindness and confidence which you have shown to me in all our unofficial relations. I hope that, in spite of your new duties, heavy though they will be, you will occasionally have time to watch the struggle with Abbas.—Very sincerely yours, CROMER. 11

## CHAPTER V

### THE METHODS OF ABBAS II

Relations with Tewfik Pasha—Abbas II.'s covetousness of wealth—His courtesy and sense of humour—The administration of the Wakfs—The Mehkemeh Sheraieh—The Cadi—The case of Prince Ahmed Seif-el-Din—Intrigues with Constantinople—Protection afforded to the Young Turks—Leon Fehmi—Seizure of correspondence—Case of Osman Pasha Bederkhan—Mutiny of a black regiment—Conclusion.

I ADD some account of the subsequent personal relations between Abbas II. and myself.

I have on the whole a pleasant recollection of my intercourse with his father during the first nine years of the British occupation of Egypt. It cannot be said that Tewfik Pasha was a man of either very strong character or of remarkable ability. But he had some sterling good qualities, to which I have on a former occasion endeavoured to do justice.<sup>1</sup> He had never visited Europe, but he knew Egypt well, and thoroughly understood the national character of the Egyptians. His opinions on all matters connected with the internal administration of the country were

<sup>1</sup> *Modern Egypt*, vol. ii. pp. 327-333.

always well deserving of consideration. He took a real if somewhat desultory interest in political and administrative questions. I do not remember a single occasion on which any really serious difference of opinion arose between us in the discussion of such matters. I am quite confident that in no single instance did my interference become necessary by reason of Tewfik Pasha attempting to commit any arbitrary or unjust act either to enrich himself or in order to wreak vengeance on some individual who had incurred his displeasure. He was careful in the management of his private affairs, and his behaviour in his personal relations with his subjects, in so far as it came within my cognisance, was irreproachable.

My relations with Abbas II. were, of course, of a wholly different nature. At the time of his accession to the Khedivate he was too young to have gained any political or administrative experience. He had lived almost entirely in Europe, and was therefore devoid of local knowledge. I never knew him to take any real interest in the larger questions of internal administration, but he constantly interfered in the nomination of officials, his selections being wholly governed by his personal interests and predilections. In contradistinction to what happened in the days of his father, for whose memory he showed but

little filial piety, the friction which arose between us was almost entirely due to personal questions. The Khedive's main wish in life apparently was to enrich himself by every possible means in his power. As a matter of fact, he did amass great wealth, which he squandered, and eventually got himself into a very embarrassing financial position. He was constantly coveting some Naboth's vineyard lying in proximity to his own estates, and inasmuch as, following the precedent set by his grandfather, Ismail Pasha, for whom he had a great admiration, he was scrupulously careful to observe legal forms, it was often no easy matter to prevent great injustice being done in the name of the law.

Before proceeding any further I may perhaps allude very briefly to some silly stories which appeared from time to time, mostly in the English press, in connection with alleged "incidents" which occurred in the course of my discussions with the Khedive. They were all pure inventions. Abbas II., who is very well-mannered, always treated me with the utmost courtesy, and I trust that, on my part, I was never wanting in that outward deference which constituted a legitimate prerogative of his high position. Lord Canning said very wisely during the Indian Mutiny that there could be no greater mistake than to confound violence and vigour. It is an equally

great mistake, in dealing with high-class Orientals, who are almost invariably very courteous, to confound firmness and the use of discourteous or intemperate language. In dealing with Abbas II. it was particularly easy to conform to all the conventional laws of politeness, for he was not only intelligent, but possessed a genuine sense of humour, which always elicited my warmest sympathies. I give an instance in point. At one time he was a good deal alarmed at the presence in Egypt of a large number of Italian artisans who had been imported to work on the Assouan dam. Many of them were believed to be extreme anarchists. A couple of so-called "secret" police officers, whose identity was well known to every resident in Cairo, were brought from Italy, and were always in close attendance on the Khedive. In the course of conversation on one occasion I said to His Highness that I did not think he need be much alarmed, for that if the anarchists murdered any one they were quite as likely to murder me as him. The idea was, he evidently thought, novel and felicitous; he at once appreciated the latent humour of the situation. His face was wreathed with smiles as he joyously replied, "Tiens, c'est vrai!"

The peculiar nature of those institutions which are essentially indigenous afforded great facilities to the Khedive for opportunities to add to his

private fortune. These were the administrations of the Wakfs and the Mehkemeh Sheraieh.

The administration of the Wakfs deals with all matters connected with religious and charitable endowments, the estates of minors and others incapacitated from managing their own affairs, and cognate matters. The revenues at the disposal of the Administration are very large. They have for a long time past been grossly mismanaged. Of late years the abuses have been singularly flagrant, the Khedive having practically taken the Administration into his own hands. I was well aware of these abuses, but I postponed taking any very drastic steps to reform them. My reasons were twofold. In the first place, I thought it desirable to allow the nascent Moslem discontent on the subject to mature and to blossom into a really effective demand for radical change before laying hands on an institution which, in the eyes of the Egyptians, is vested with a semi-religious character. In the second place, in view of the growing demand for Egyptian autonomy, I thought it desirable that a very long and patient trial should be given in order to see how far the Egyptians themselves, without any European aid, could reform an essentially indigenous institution. I did, indeed, manage to get some order introduced into the accounts, being stimulated to exertions in this direction by

the conviction that the most extreme partisan would hardly be able to convince the Egyptian public that a covert attack was aimed at the religion of Islam by an attempt to deal with a matter of this sort. But beyond this I did nothing. It was reserved for Lord Kitchener to take the matter seriously in hand, to eliminate the Khedive's interference, and to place the administration of the Wakfs on a greatly improved basis. I regard this as one of the most useful and beneficial reforms undertaken in Egypt for a long time past.

The Mehkemeh Sheraieh may be described as a sort of Egyptian Court of Chancery. It deals with all matters connected with the personal status of Mohammedan Ottoman subjects, such as divorce, testamentary succession, etc. These matters are governed by the Sacred Law of Islam, which, most unfortunately for Moslems, cannot be changed. It is this immutability which, almost as much as polygamy and slavery, has checked progress in all Moslem countries. The Cadi, or Chief Judge, in these Courts has, until quite recently, always been a Turk, appointed from Constantinople. During the latter part of my tenure of office in Egypt the Cadi was a fine specimen of the old ultra-conservative Turkish school. He was a thorn in the side of the British judicial reformers. He was convinced

of the perfection of the system with which he was associated, and offered the most stubborn resistance to all attempts at reform. Personally, I had a great liking for him. He had his good points. He was perfectly honest, and, to the best of my belief, was wholly incapable of being bribed. He was also independent and absolutely refused to lend himself to the Khedive's projects for the acquisition of wealth. I sometimes endeavoured to convince him that the judicial system which he administered could perfectly well be reformed without in any way infringing the Sacred Law of Islam. I would point out that in India even Christian judges administered the law to the perfect satisfaction of Moslem litigants, and I would urge that there surely could be no objection to the appointment of Moslem judges to the *Mehkemehs* who had received a sound legal education instead of selections being invariably made from what are known as the "turbaned" class. To all these arguments he was absolutely impervious. Nevertheless, when he was able to help the course of natural justice without straining his very sensitive Islamic conscience, he was quite willing to do so. For instance, cases occasionally occurred of native Christians becoming Moslems in order to get rid of their wives and to marry others. Under the Moslem law, which then governed the proceedings



of the husband, the children could be taken away from their Christian mother. Thus, grave and cruel injustice was done. When I spoke to the Cadi on the subject, he would reply, with perfect reason, that if the matter were brought before him sitting in his judicial capacity, he could not do otherwise than decide according to the strict letter of the law, but he would add that he had no sort of sympathy for the profligate husband, that he held in the utmost scorn persons who professed conversion to Islam from interested motives, and that if, as was sometimes the case, I could arrange matters according to what I thought right by moral pressure or by extra-legal methods, in which he had no part, he would certainly not take the initiative in raising objections. I considered that these sterling and by no means very common qualities amply compensated for the sturdy opposition which the Cadi offered to all judicial reforms. Unfortunately, after I left Egypt the legal reformers, exasperated by their inability to introduce the changes which they, I do not doubt with great reason, held to be necessary, made a strenuous effort to get rid of this obstructionist Cadi. They found a natural and very willing ally in the Khedive, whose motives were of a very different character from theirs. They were successful. A new Cadi was appointed from Constantinople.

The result was that the reformers, who, I have reason to believe, subsequently recognised that they had made a mistake, were greatly disappointed. Really effective reform of the Mehkemehs was not facilitated, whilst on the other hand the cause of justice suffered, for the new Cadi became a ready tool of the Khedive.

Thus, with the command of the Wakfs Administration and a servile judge presiding at the Mehkemehs, great facilities were offered to the Khedive for the execution of his plans to enrich himself.

The abuses which occurred, and of which I do not doubt only comparatively few reached the ears of the British authorities, were unquestionably very numerous. I need not, however, dilate on them at length. Indeed, after a lapse of some years the details of most of the cases which occurred in my time have escaped my memory, and in matters of this sort accuracy of detail is essential. I give, however, the main features of one notable case. It is typical of many others.

A member of the Khedivial family, named Seif-el-Din Bey, endeavoured to assassinate his brother-in-law, Prince Ahmed Pasha Fouad. He was tried by a Criminal Court and sentenced to a term of imprisonment. Subsequently it was ascertained that he was insane. With the full

consent of the Khedive he was sent to reside in a private lunatic asylum in England. He was very rich. I believe that the revenue derived from his landed estates amounted to about £40,000 a year. In this case I insisted on an Egyptian being appointed to manage the estates, who, though not a man of any very special ability, was believed to be perfectly honest and upright. After I left Egypt, my nominee was removed. The Khedive practically took the affair in hand himself, and there can be little doubt that he appropriated a large sum of ready money which had been allowed to accumulate, as well as the annual revenue from the property. I was not, therefore, surprised to read quite recently the following passage in the *Egyptian Gazette*: it is a translation of a paragraph which appeared in an Arabic newspaper:

The examination of the accounts of the Daira of Prince Ahmed Seif-el-Din Bey has resulted in disclosing the fact that enormous amounts of its revenues have been either misspent or transferred into other channels. The Khedive is the chief trustee of the estate.

Another fertile source of friction with Abbas II. was that he became a pliant tool in the hands of the Sultan Abdul Hamid. Intrigues with Constantinople were specially rife during what is known as the "Sinai Peninsula" incident, when a determined but wholly unsuccessful effort

was made by the Sultan to extend the Turkish frontier to a line running from El Arish, on the Mediterranean coast, to Suez.<sup>1</sup> The Young Turk party owe to England a deep debt of gratitude, which they have certainly not repaid, for the protection afforded by the British Government to many of their members who had fled to Egypt. From a purely technical point of view the Sultan was probably within his legal rights in demanding that Ottoman subjects who had incurred his displeasure should be handed over to him, but it was practically quite out of the question that, so long as the British Government exercised a paramount influence in Egypt, political offenders should be delivered up to such semblance of justice as would have been meted out to them at Constantinople. Of course, it was frequently alleged that the individual whose presence was required at Constantinople was not a political

<sup>1</sup> At the present moment it is perhaps of some interest to record that about this time I was approached on the subject of allowing a railway to be constructed from Syria to Port Said. I do not know where the capital was to come from, or who were the real originators of the project. I do not think it emanated from Berlin or Constantinople. The agent who spoke to me on the subject was a Belgian gentleman, who was a personal friend of my own and a warm supporter of the British occupation of Egypt. However this may be, I discouraged the proposal and mentioned in the course of conversation that if at any time a railway was constructed to connect the two countries the line would of course have to be laid along its whole length within 100 yards of the seashore, so as to be well under the fire of the guns of the British fleet. I never heard anything more of the proposal.

offender but was charged with some criminal offence. In such cases the answer was that there was no desire to shield criminals, and that, if the evidence was sent to Egypt, the accused person should be tried by an Egyptian criminal court. Of course, no evidence was ever forthcoming.

I give a few instances to show the extent to which the Khedive was mixed up in affairs of this sort.

A man named Leon Fehmi was at one time employed as a spy at Constantinople. He subsequently incurred the displeasure of the Sultan. His life was in danger and he fled to Egypt. The Sultan was very desirous that he should be sent back to Constantinople. He was accordingly induced to go to the Khedive's Palace at Alexandria. On his way there he met a friend, whom he requested to inform me of the facts in the event of his not returning in a few hours. After waiting the allotted time, his friend telegraphed to me, I being then at Cairo. I at once despatched a very capable British officer in the Egyptian service to Alexandria with instructions to see the Khedive and to enquire into the facts of the case. The Khedive positively denied all knowledge of Leon Fehmi's whereabouts, and further denied that he had ever been summoned to the Palace. These assertions were repeated by the Khedive at a subsequent interview

between His Highness and myself, accompanied by indignant remonstrances against the unworthy suspicions which had been cast on his conduct. It subsequently transpired that Leon Fehmi on arrival at the Palace did not see the Khedive himself, but was taken on board His Highness's yacht, which was about to proceed to Constantinople. Subsequently, that is to say after the Khedive's interview with the British officer, he was landed. When the Khedive gave me his word of honour that Leon Fehmi was not imprisoned in his Palace, he spoke the truth ; but he omitted to state that the man was forcibly detained in a house situated in the immediate neighbourhood.

In consequence of the stir which had been made, Leon Fehmi was not sent to Constantinople. He was smuggled off under a guard to Port Said and there placed on board a steamer which was about to proceed to Marseilles. He subsequently returned to Egypt and published an account, which I believe to have been substantially correct, of all that had occurred. No one believed him. The local press, both European and Egyptian, scouted his story, and were loud in their expressions of indignation at the false aspersions which had been thrown on the Khedive. For my own part, I did not think myself called upon to correct these erroneous

views. Leon Fehmi was himself not deserving of much sympathy. I considered that the dignity of British principles had been sufficiently vindicated by saving the man from the clutches of the Sultan. I therefore remained silent.

I give another instance. One day the English head of the Cairo Police came to see me and informed me that a wardrobe in a certain house contained a quantity of documents which gravely compromised a number of Young Turks, that a lawsuit, believed to have been instigated by the Khedive, had been instituted against the proprietor of the house, who was in embarrassed pecuniary circumstances, with a view to seizing these documents, that the Young Turks were much alarmed, that there was even some possibility of an attempt being made on the Khedive's life if he allowed the papers to fall into the hands of the Sultan, and that, if anything was to be done, prompt action was necessary, as the seals of the Tribunal were about to be affixed to the wardrobe containing the incriminating documents. It is a serious matter to break the seals affixed by order of a law-court. In order, therefore, to avoid the occurrence of any such contingency, I authorised the head of the police to go at once to the house, break open the wardrobe and bring its contents to the British Agency. This was accordingly done. The papers were subsequently destroyed.

A third case, which is perhaps worth citing, is that of Osman Pasha Bederkhan, who was the head of a great Kurdish family, and who had been the favourite *aide-de-camp* of the Sultan. He fell into disfavour in consequence of being suspected of Young Turk proclivities, but he succeeded in avoiding arrest and in escaping to Egypt. I saw him and informed him that if during his stay in Egypt he abstained from intrigues he would be protected. He promised to do so, and kept his word. The Sultan confiscated all his property, degraded him from the ranks he held, and requested that he should be sent to Constantinople. The request was refused. Subsequently, the Khedive did his utmost to induce Osman Pasha to go to Constantinople. The Pasha applied to the British Agency for advice. He was told that he had much better remain in Cairo. Eventually, he was shown a correspondence which, it was alleged, had passed between an agent of the Khedive and the Private Secretary of the Sultan. The latter said that His Imperial Majesty was quite convinced that he had been in error, that he regretted what had passed, and that he was anxious on Osman Pasha's return to restore him to favour and to the enjoyment of all his estates. Compensation would also be afforded to him for the losses which he had incurred. Osman still doubted, and the



Khedive then said that as a proof of his friendship, etc., and as Osman would at first be somewhat straitened, he would ask him to accept a temporary loan of a large sum (I believe it was £500) to tide him over his difficulty. This finally persuaded the Pasha that the offer was genuine. He accordingly agreed to go to Constantinople. Abbas II. gave him a draft on the Ottoman Bank, letters of high recommendation, etc., and he went off without again communicating with the British Agency, beyond leaving a verbal message of gratitude and explanation with a friend. On arrival at Constantinople he was seized on board the ship, thrown into prison, and thence despatched to the interior of Tripoli. After some long while he was released (before Abdul Hamid's fall) and returned to Constantinople. Being there in the utmost distress he bethought himself of the Khedive's draft, which he had managed to retain. He took it to the Bank; it was sent in to the Manager, and handed back to him inscribed: "*Traite annulée par ordre de Son Altesse le Khédivé le . . .*," the date being the day following that of Osman's embarkation from Alexandria. The cancelled draft was seen by my Oriental Secretary, Mr. H. Boyle.

I cite another case of a different description as illustrative of the difficulties which arose in dealing with Abbas II. It shows that the

incident already narrated in this volume did not altogether cure him of his desire to tamper with the discipline of the army. At the commencement of the South African War, several of the best British officers in command of the black battalions of the Egyptian army quartered in the Soudan rejoined the regiments in the British army to which they belonged. Owing to circumstances which I need not relate in detail, and which would very possibly never have occurred if these experienced officers had not been obliged to leave, some discontent prevailed in the army. One black battalion broke into open mutiny. The Khedive had, it was currently reported, used language which allowed the mutineers to think that he sympathised with them. The mutiny was suppressed without bloodshed. Some of the ringleaders were tried by court-martial and condemned to various terms of imprisonment. They were sent to Cairo to undergo their sentences. In speaking to the Khedive on the subject, I thought it desirable to ignore altogether his alleged complicity with the mutineers, of which, of course, it would have been very difficult, and perhaps altogether impossible, to obtain any absolutely conclusive evidence. I dwelt, therefore, wholly on the grave disloyalty which some of his troops had displayed towards his own person, and suggested that he should see the

condemned men and address them in words which were of my own choice and which I had caused to be translated into Arabic. The Khedive thus found himself on the horns of a dilemma, for refusal and assent to my proposal were probably both highly distasteful to him. If he refused, he laid himself open to grave suspicion of having fomented a mutiny in his own army, as his grandfather had done before him.<sup>1</sup> If he consented, it would at once become apparent to the mutineers that they could expect no effective help from him, and that his influence for evil in the army would, to say the least, be greatly impaired. As I had anticipated, he chose the latter course.

I have now said enough to show that, looking to the character and behaviour of Abbas II., it was practically impossible that any really cordial relations could exist between him and the representative of the British Government in Egypt. I would add that throughout all these difficulties I never entertained the least personal animosity against Abbas II. History has recorded the deeds of many Eastern and perhaps of some Western rulers who were quite as unfit and indeed even more unfit to govern than the ex-Khedive. But I felt very strongly that, if he were allowed to pursue his way unchecked,

<sup>1</sup> See *Modern Egypt*, vol. i. pp. 79-81.

the civilising work which Great Britain has undertaken in Egypt would be gradually undermined, that corruption of various sorts would again become rampant, and that there was even some risk that, as in the days of Ismail Pasha, Egypt would again degenerate into being the happy hunting-ground of the political and financial adventurer. There is a good deal of truth in Pindar's lines :

Ῥῥῆδιον μὲν γὰρ πόλιν σείσαι καὶ ἀφαιροτέροις·  
ἀλλ' ἐπὶ χώρας αἰτίας ἔσσαι δυσπαλὲς δὴ γίγνεται, ἑξαπίνης  
εἰ μὴ θεὸς ἀγεμόνεσσι κυβερνατὴρ γένηται.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *Pyth.* iv. 272-74: "It is a small thing even for a slight man to shake a city, but to set it firm again in its place this is a hard struggle indeed, unless with sudden aid God guide the ruler's hand."

Tennyson sent this quotation to Mr. Gladstone when the latter introduced his Home Rule Bill into Parliament. But it is much more applicable to Abbas II. than to Mr. Gladstone, for the former is and the latter, whatever else he may have been, was very distinctly not *ἀφαιρός*—an expression which E. Myers translates "a slight man."

THE END

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